THE BIBLE
OUR HERITAGE

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BY

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THE BIBLE OUR HERITAGE
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TO

MY WIFE

PREFACE

This simple little book grew out of some talks, and later a series of lectures, given at different times and places to groups of Sunday-school teachers and other Christian workers. They seemed to meet a need and a desire on the part of such workers for information and thought upon the topics presented. This led to the feeling that if the material were written out and published in a brief, clear and untechnical way it might reach a wider circle and be of service to many who have not access to more elaborate and profound books which deal with the subjects grouped and discussed in this volume. It may be that some may be moved to further study upon the fascinating and useful topics here presented; and it is hoped that many to whom the material is more or less familiar may be helped to a deeper appreciation of our priceless heritage in the Word of God.

E. C. D.

Nashville, Tennessee,
February 22, 1924.

INTRODUCTION

Tennyson wrote a famous line in which the speaker describes himself as "the heir of all the ages in the foremost files of time." The phrase is apt and abiding. We of this generation—of any generation—though we walk at the head of the procession of humanity are yet heirs of all the ages past. We have inherited evil as well as good, but also—let us not forget—good as well as evil. The treasures of this "goodly heritage" are many and priceless. They cover the widest range and diversity of objects and vary infinitely in quality and character. There are treasures of knowledge, of literature, of art, of principles of conduct, of institutions and laws, of sentiments and opinions, of social and political aims and ideals.

Among the chief treasures of our splendid heritage from the past is that unparalleled collection of ancient writings which we familiarly know as the Bible. It is a treasure house of the loftiest, purest and best sentiments that can be awakened or encouraged in the soul. We love the Good Book because it teaches and helps us to love everything that is good and brings the supreme message that God himself is Love. Paul touched

one of the high places when he wrote: "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three, and the greatest of these is love." The many forms and phases in which that supreme sentiment is presented in the Bible may well claim a moment's notice.

The love of man and woman—husband and wife—the sweet and tender sentiment that ennobles and purifies sex attraction, is set forth and safeguarded in the Bible with a wealth of illustration, example, counsel and command beyond all valuation. And following this the love of offspring is touched with the radiance of the spiritual and divine and becomes more than the beautiful animal instinct of the mother bird or beast, or the herding or protective impulse of the male of the species. The Bible teaches in the noblest way the love and care of parents for their children, and reciprocally the love and duty of children for parents. And we know that where that Book has had and holds its beneficent sway over the hearts of men there the happiest and the best homes are found.

Besides the domestic sentiments many others are forcibly taught in this Book of books. The love of country and home, of neighbors and friends; the blessedness of virtue, the joy of peace, of justice, of courage, of all that is high and holy in human feeling and desire are portrayed here. Paul again touches the lofty height of eloquent and just statement when he says:

"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honourable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." And his closing appeal, "think on these things," brings us to another aspect of the matter.

The Bible is a heritage of thought. It does not contain, was never intended to contain, the whole sum of human thought and knowledge. But when all proper qualifications are made, it remains true that the debt we owe to the Bible as an intellectual force in human history is beyond all computation. It sheds light upon all the problems of the human mind. It reaches back to the beginning of all things, and points forward to the final consummation—that "far off divine event to which the whole creation moves." It does not tell men all that they want to know, but it places in their hands the clew to the labyrinth and the key for the final escape. Its leading themes are God, the universe, man, sin, salvation and immortality. No greater thoughts have ever engaged or can engage the mind of man. The vast literature which the Bible has produced on these and kindred themes is itself an indestructible witness to the place which it holds among the intellectual forces of the world.

And not only has it produced, and is continuing to produce, a great literature, but it is itself

a literary collection of the utmost value. Literature is the expression and preservation of thought. As such it is now so vast as to be practically beyond estimate, so varied as to challenge wonder and joy, and so priceless as to awaken admiration or even awe. The Bible holds high place in this great assemblage of the fruits of human thought, and that without reference to its divine inspiration and authority. Its contribution to the literature of history is beyond price, to that of poetry is rich and lofty, to that of philosophy (in its broadest meaning as the theory of all human life) is of surpassing moment and value.

The Bible is also a noble heritage of moral teaching. In answer to an inquiry our Lord declared that the first and highest of all the commandments and therefore the first and highest of all human obligations is: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Each term is expressive, but the significant thing is that mind, soul, and strength are placed under the leadership and drive of love, the supreme emotion. The foundation of ethics is the character and will of God. In his revelation of himself to his chosen people God says: "Be ye holy, for I am holy." And Jesus expresses this grand principle in his own way when he declares (and it matters not for the moment whether the language is imperative or

descriptive): "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." And on this the saintly William Law remarked: "The question is not whether gospel perfection can be fully attained, but whether you come as near it as a sincere intention and careful diligence can carry you." Thus in the Bible the character and will of a perfect divine Being are proposed as the essential principle in even the consciously imperfect struggle of a human soul toward perfection.

On the basis of the divine character and will rests the human obligation. Our moral duties are mainly our duties to each other. And these are provided for in what, on the same occasion, Jesus recognized as the second law: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This was another way of putting the Golden Rule: "All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." Like every other rule it is not without exceptions, which, however, are more apparent than real. But properly understood and applied it is the sum of human duty toward fellow man. Paul, with characteristic logic, says, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Both as a theory of ethics and as a basis of practical and personal moral conduct there is and there can be no higher principle than that which the Bible teaches.

To sum it all up, we would say that the Bible

is our greatest heritage in the sphere of religion. Its opening language is, "In the beginning God"; its closing prayer is, "Even so, come quickly, Lord Jesus." Certainly the one essential thing about the Bible is its distinctively religious message. All things are included in this. Through all its sentimental, intellectual, and ethical fabric runs this one golden thread: the Bible shows us the way to God and helps us to find it. It brings the assurance of God's reality, approachableness, grace, and power. It rebukes human pride, condemns human sin, awakens the conscience, draws out the affections, offers salvation and promises immortality. The whole sum and substance of religion in its most intense personal realization and in its broadest universality is expressed and enjoined in this fadeless Word of God. As compared with other religions, or no religion, the religion of the Bible presents to us the best God, the best possible man, the best way for man to find God, and then the best results and expressions of that most vital and precious of all discoveries.

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CHAPTER I

THE WRITING OF THE BIBLE

We have come to speak of the Bible as a "book," but we know that strictly speaking it is a collection of books—sixty-six of them, thirty-nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New. The Bible is "a book" only in two senses: (1) its contents are printed and bound into one volume; (2) this external unity is based on the inward and vital fact that this collection of writings constitutes for Christians the inspired and authoritative Word of God, the revelation of his thought and will to mankind. The word "bible," it is interesting to remember, was originally not singular (*βίβλος*) "book," but plural (*τὰ βίβλια*) "the books," meaning the sacred books, the holy Scriptures, accepted by Christians as the one Word of God, though composed of these sixty-six separate writings.

Every book, and therefore every collection of books, before it was copied or printed or otherwise reproduced must have been composed and written. Now the actual writing may have been

done either by the author or by some other writer under his direction. This is as true of the books of the Bible as of any other writing. Its sixty-six books were written, then copied, translated into other languages, copied again, then printed, and reprinted in millions of copies, as we have it. But far back of these printed copies of the translated Bible as a whole lies in the long ages ago the writing in ancient Hebrew and Greek of each one of the sixty-six books which make up our Bible. We are to think together of how this wondrous Book, or collection of books, came to be written: Its divine Author, its human writers, the process of writing.

The Divine Author

Among the many thousands of ancient writings which have come down to us through the processes of copying, translating, and printing, what sort of place does this Bible, this collection of sixty-six books, hold in the estimation of mankind? There are many who know nothing about it, many who know of it, but have no special or personal interest in it, and many who have only a vague or languid interest as in a great matter of general knowledge without any particular care for deeper knowledge. There is also a group of scholars and thinkers who have a profound scientific, historical, literary interest in the Bible such as they would have in any important and

unusual collection of human writings. As a collection of religious literature with some degree of historical value but only as a human production the Bible appeals to thinkers of this kind with varying force and for various reasons. But to us Christians the Bible is far more than a human book. We hold that it is the one and only true revelation of God to men, bringing to them his truth and his law; that back of and through the human writers were the presence and influence of God, and sometimes his direct communication and command; and that this divine direction was not merely ordinary and providential, but was extraordinary and supernatural. In other words we hold that the Bible, though written by men, was inspired by God in such an actual and personal way as to be his own Word to us concerning himself and his relations to us. In the language of the *Abstract of Principles of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary:* "The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments were given by inspiration of God, are the only sufficient, certain, and authoritative rule of all saving knowledge, faith and obedience." Under this statement, similar to many others, there is room for much difference of opinion as to many details concerning the mode, the extent, and the results of the divine inspiration. But the conviction that these sixty-six writings making up our Bible are the true and authoritative Word of God rests secure and firm on two main consid-

erations:[1] its witness to itself; and the witness of Christian experience.

The Bible bears witness to itself as the true Word of God in several clear and emphatic ways. First of all, many of the Old Testament writers in various statements claimed to write under immediate and positive direction of God. A common prophetic formula was, "Thus saith the Lord." Sometimes the claim was even more specific. These claims of the writers of the Old Testament to write the actually revealed truth of God were recognized by Jesus and his apostles to be valid.[2] In one memorable discourse our Lord declares "the Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35), plainly meaning that the Old Testament revelation of God was true and final. In regard to the writing of the prophecies Peter plainly says: "Holy men of God spake as they were moved (literally, *borne along*), by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21). Paul also in a well-known passage (2 Timothy 3:16) speaks of the "holy Scriptures" and describes them as "inspired of God." In regard to the divine inspiration of the New Testament writings we should bear in mind the promises and directions given by Christ to his apostles and others stating that they should be guided into the truth by the Holy

1 See *Doctrines of Our Faith*, p. 16 ff.
2 (Old Testament)—John 10:35; Matt. 4:4, 6, 7, 10; 11:10; Mark 14:27; 2 Peter 1:19-21; 2 Tim. 3:16.
(New Testament)—Matt. 28:19, 20; John 14:26; 15:26, 27; 20:21, 22; 1 Cor. 2:10-13; 14:37, 38; 1 Thess. 4:2, 8; 2 Peter 3:15, 16; Heb. 1:1, 2; John 17:8.

Spirit. Paul distinctly claims (1 Cor. 2:10-13) to teach not by human wisdom but under direct and conscious guidance of the Spirit; and Peter (2 Peter 3:15, 16) recognizes Paul's claim and places his writings among "the other Scriptures," that is those which bore the authority of God. Thus by a number of direct statements the Bible here and there bears witness to itself as the inspired and authoritative Word of God.

Another way in which the Bible bears witness to itself as the Word of God and a true revelation of himself is by its contents, character and fruits. We cannot here elaborate this argument. It does not appeal to all, for some readers are critical and some even skeptical as to these matters. But to many thoughtful, earnest, competent thinkers and scholars of all times, and to multitudes of plain but intelligent and serious people the world over, the Book, both by what it is and by what it does, brings the sure belief in its divine origin and inspiration. This conviction was clearly stated and powerfully argued by Henry Rogers, a strong thinker of a generation ago, in the formula that "the Bible is not such a book as man could have written if he would, or would have written if he could." Even in our overcritical age there is much food for thought in this way of putting the matter. The Bible as a whole carries upon itself a peculiar and exalted character in the truths which it pronounces, the morals which it teaches, the hopes

which it inspires, the dignity of its utterances, the loftiness of its claims, the force of its appeals. And this impression of an origin and quality beyond man is strengthened when we think of the marvelous fruits and effects of the Bible in human life and history. "Led by its teachings, men have been brought to see God, to love and trust and serve him; they have found a Saviour from sin, and increasing help and hope in their struggle toward righteousness; they have learned and practiced the highest and purest principles of conduct toward each other; they have received and cherished a firm and fadeless hope of eternal life."[3]

What has been said brings us to consider the force and value of Christian experience in confirming the witness of the Bible itself. We do not claim that this experience is decisive or sufficient in itself; but that it has strong corroborative value. This experience is both individual and historic.

We may say that it is the normal experience —real though of course varying in intensity and clearness—of every true Christian in reading his Bible that somehow in it God is speaking to him. No other literature affects him in this way. This feeling has been well expressed by Coleridge in an oft-mentioned saying:[4] "In the Bible there is more that finds me than I have experienced

[3] *Doctrines of Our Faith*, p. 18.
[4] As quoted by Nolan R. Best, *Inspiration*, p. 154.

in all other books put together; the words of the Bible find me at greater depths of my being; and whatever finds me brings with it an irresistible evidence of its having proceeded from the Holy Spirit."

This normal individual experience is also historic. In many of the Christian creeds the first statement asserts the belief that the Bible is the inspired and authoritative Word of God. This is no accident; and it cannot be dismissed with a wave of the hand as mere "traditionalism." The most of what we know and believe on any subject is more or less traditional, that is, it has been handed down to us from the past; not the fact or process of the handing down, but the character and contents of the tradition are what should concern us. And in case of a great and worthy body of truth the fact that it has been commonly accepted by serious and thoughtful people, even against the sharp and repeated attacks of many and various critics and through many ages, is no little argument in its favor. Judged in this way the acceptance of the Bible, through the persistent consensus of Christian opinion, as being the true Word of God is a belief for which no candid mind need apologize.

Now a word as to the sixty-six books contained in the Bible. Why these and no others? We know that the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament were those upon which the Jews had gradually settled as their sacred books by the

time of Christ and the Apostles, and were recognized by our Lord and his followers as the inspired Word of God. On this basis they were accepted by the early Christians. And so down to us. As to the New Testament, it is again a case of Christian experience and of providential guidance through the centuries.[5] By the middle of the third century the early Christians had been led to a final acceptance of the twenty-seven New Testament books as the true Word of God. No external authority imposed, only ratified, this belief. It stands through the ages as the general judgment and faith of Christians.[6]

The Human Writers

In giving his revelation of himself *to* man God gave it *through* men. This is set out in 2 Peter 1:19-21, for the Old Testament and by implication for the New; and in Hebrews 1:1, 2 for both. God did not ignore but used the natural gifts and qualities of the writers, their acquired knowledge and skill, and the languages, habits, ideas and forms of thought of the times and places in which they lived. Thus God did indeed speak "in many parts and in many ways" (Heb. 1:1, 2). Some of the writers are unknown—many in the Old Testament, one (Hebrews) in

5 See Dana, *Authenticity of the Holy Scripture*, p. 90 ff.
6 As to the Apocryphal Books, see Price, *Ancestry of Our English Bible*, Ch. 12, p. 119 ff. It is impossible to discuss this difficult matter here. Let it suffice to say that for various reasons Protestant scholars have rejected all this literature, while Catholics have accepted some as part of the Bible.

the New. But many of them are named or indicated, and some of these are well known. Take, for example, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Amos, in the Old Testament, and all whom we know in the New: Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude. Doubtless these and other writers wrote other books and letters which have not come down to us; but by God's providential care these sixty-six have been preserved through the centuries and grouped and accepted by the general, though not unanimous, judgment of Christian people as the true Word of God. Thus we reach and hold the firm and reasoned conviction that the Bible is both a divine and supernatural *and* a human and natural book. Here is no contradiction, only two parts of a sphere—the co-working of two forces to a great result.

As to the way in which God communicated his thoughts and commands to the inspired writers we do not know enough to make positive assertions. But we accept the fact without being able to explain the manner of his guidance or direction. Yet there are some statements and hints which throw light upon the matter. In Exodus 17:14 we have God's explicit direction to Moses to "write this for a memorial in a book"—i.e., his solemn doom of Amalek. Again, in Exodus 24:1-8 we have an account of the writing and consecrating of the "book of the covenant" in which Moses "wrote all the words of Jehovah."

In Jeremiah 36:1, 2 we have that prophet's plain and unequivocal statement that "in the fourth year of Jehoiakim" he received the positive command of Jehovah to take a "roll of a book and write therein all the words" that he had spoken against Israel and Judah and others. In these the divine and human elements both appear. Coming to the New Testament and taking its most prolific writer, Paul, we have already cited the very interesting passage in 1 Cor. 2:6-16 where the apostle distinctly claims for himself (and perhaps others) that he spoke "God's wisdom in a mystery," "as God revealed it through the Spirit," "not in words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Spirit teacheth," and concludes his discussion with the emphatic assertion, "We have the mind of Christ." Here also the double line of divine and human activity appears. Peter also, as before noted (2 Peter 1:20, 21), brings this out in regard to the Old Testament Scriptures, and further (3:15, 16) declares that "our beloved brother Paul" wrote "according to the wisdom given to him," and puts his writings along with "the other Scriptures." In the case of Luke we have a notable instance of how God used both the native gifts and the acquired culture of an accurate historian to write the third Gospel and the Book of Acts.[7]

7 See Robertson's *Luke the Historian* for an able and fascinating account of Luke as a writer of history.

In his prefaces (Luke 1:1-4; Acts 1:1) the inspired scholar tells us something of his methods and purposes.

The Means of Writing

Under this head are included the languages, the material, and the processes or methods by which these inspired writers brought the Word of God to their own age and thus consciously or unconsciously provided for its preservation and transmission to all following ages down to our own.

Of course we know that the original languages of the Bible were for the Old Testament, Hebrew; and for the New Testament, Greek. The Hebrew in which the books of the Old Testament were written ceased to be spoken and written during the Captivity of the Jews and gave place to the so-called Aramaic—a very similar language of Syrian or Chaldaic origin. The Greek of the New Testament differs much from the ancient so-called "classical" Greek, but was the prevalent, or "common" (κοινή) Greek of the times in which the New Testament was written. We shall have more to say about these languages later. Here it is enough to remark that the inspired writers simply and naturally wrote down what they received from God in the languages which they and their readers used.

The means and materials of writing[8] in ancient times were many and various. We here take account of those employed in many ancient writings, including the Old and New Testament books, namely, paper, ink, and pen.[9] Parchment or vellum does not seem to have been generally used until after the Christian era, and then for copying and preserving valued writings which had been first written on papyrus—ancient paper. As its name reminds us, this material was prepared from the papyrus plant. Strips of the pith[10] were laid lengthwise and another layer crosswise, pressure or rolling was applied, and the sheet was then dried and was ready for use. The ink was usually made of soot (lampblack) and gum, and was of lasting quality, as the many surviving papyri show. The kind of pen seems to have been at first a sharpened reed (*κάλαμος*) and later a quill (*penna*).

The process of writing was probably most often and naturally by the hand of the writer himself. But it is evident that Jeremiah (Jer. 36, especially verses 4, 17, 18, 23, 28) used the services of Baruch the Scribe. Also it is known that in writing the great Epistle to the Romans Paul had the help of one Tertius (16:22) who sent his salutation along with the Apostle's.

8 See the scholarly article on *Writing,* by F. G. Kenyon in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible;* and the recent and interesting book by George Milligan, *Here and There Among the Papyri;* also Price, *Ancestry of Our English Bible;* et al.

9 See 2 John 12; 3 John 13.

10 Some say the stems, bark and all, but Kenyon thinks that the description of the process of preparation given by Pliny (*Natural History,* 13:1-13) means that the pith only was used.

That this was Paul's custom from the first appears from 2 Thessalonians 3:17; Galatians 6:11; 1 Corinthians 16:21; Colossians 4:18, where he speaks of giving the closing salutation of each letter with his own hand, implying that the body of the letter had been dictated. Whether these amanuenses wrote in long hand, or first in short hand and afterwards wrote out in full, we do not know. But both ways were known and used in ancient times. In these natural human ways and through human writers the great divine Author of the Bible has given us his Word.

Chapter II

THE PRESERVATION OF THE BIBLE

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To-day we have in our hands, translated, printed, and bound into one volume the sixty-six ancient writings which in their collected form we know and love as the Bible. It is evident that the original writings long ago wore out and perished, but copies after copies were made by hand until about the middle of the fifteenth century the art of printing was invented and since then millions upon millions of copies have been made. The Bible is well described as "the only book never off the press."

Frank H. Mann, General Secretary of the American Bible Society, says: "Four hundred and sixty-seven years ago the first book was printed from movable type. That book was the Bible, and it took five years to complete the task. One of these books sold recently for $50,000. To-day great presses printing for the American Bible Society are turning off copies of the Gospels at the rate of 10,000 an hour to be sold anywhere in the whole world for one cent each. In the intervening years the Bible has never been off the press. It has had a steady run for more than four centuries. Yet if all the Bibles printed

in all the years since printing was invented were available to-day, there would not be enough to supply the world's present population. The present rate of production of Bibles is not as great as the birth rate. Large portions of the population of the world are still unable to get the whole Bible or even a main part in their native tongue. It must be said to the credit of the church that a vast work has been done in giving the Bible to the world. In whole or in part the Bible has been translated into 770 languages or dialects. During the past decade the Bible has appeared in a new language on an average of every six weeks. In the past century some 550,000,000 copies of the Scriptures have been prepared by the Bible societies. Millions of dollars have been given by the church for this great task. Thousands of consecrated men have given themselves in sacrificial service."

Manuscript Copies

We go back in thought (for we cannot in fact) to the first copies made of the original writings. At once we notice that the circumstances for the Old Testament and the New Testament are so widely different that it is necessary to consider them separately; but there are two general remarks which apply to both: (1) The copies were made for religious purposes and with religious care, and this was a great advantage as regards

accuracy in reproduction. (2) The materials used were the same as for the originals,[1] except that for better preservation and frequent use vellum or parchment (the carefully prepared skins of various animals) was used and gradually superseded papyrus.[2] Paper, as we know it, seems to have been a Chinese invention and to have made its way into Europe through the Arabians in the Middle Ages in time to be ready for the invention of printing in the fifteenth century. It got its name only, not its material, from the papyrus plant. This ceased to be used at an earlier date.

In regard to the manuscripts of the Old Testament in Hebrew, it is a remarkable fact that they are much fewer and much later than those of the New Testament in Greek. The oldest is a mere fragment on papyrus, and is said to go back to the second century.[3] But the oldest Hebrew manuscript complete and dated is a parchment and goes back only to 1009 A.D. How account for this? The manuscripts were destroyed partly from the ravages of time and partly by enemies

1 It is interesting to compare 2 John 12 ("paper," χάρτος) with 2. Tim. 4:12 ("parchment," μεμβράνη, a Latin word simply transferred).

2 See the very learned and interesting discussion by Kenyon in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible,* article on *Writing.* He says: "Vellum superseded papyrus as the material for the best books in the fourth century, but papyrus continued to be employed for inferior copies until the seventh century. In 640, however, the Arabs conquered Egypt, and by stopping the export of papyrus, struck the death blow to its use as a vehicle of Greek and Latin literature."

3 Dr. J. R. Sampey (*Syllabus,* Introductory Note, p. 43 f, says there are a "codex of the Former and Latter Prophets now in Cairo, and dated in A. D. 895; a codex of the Latter Prophets in Petrograd, and dated in 916; a codex of the entire Hebrew Bible in Petrograd, and dated in A. D. 1009."

of the Jews and Christians, but many were destroyed through reverence for the Word by the Jewish editors and copyists after new copies had been carefully made. But so great was the care that there is no reasonable doubt that we have in existing Hebrew manuscripts a text very close to the original writings.[4]

When we come to the manuscripts of the New Testament in Greek the case is very different, both as to age and number, for they are numerous and some of them ancient. As we have seen, the original Scriptures were written on papyrus leaves, and so also probably were the first copies. But of these papyri only a few have been found and they are chiefly small fragments.[5] Later vellum or parchment was used and our best manuscripts are of this material. They are written in *uncial* (capital) letters, or in *cursive* (flowing) hand. The uncial manuscripts are ancient, one or two going back perhaps to the early part of the fourth century, though some of them may have reproduced even more ancient copies. The writings on papyrus were usually in roll form; that is, the leaves were rolled around a stick, or sometimes around two sticks, one at each side or end. From this custom comes our word "volume," from the Latin *volumen,* a roll. The writings on parchment, or vellum, were on sheets

4 Including many fragments there are about 1,700 Hebrew manuscripts of various dates. See Price, *Ancestry of Our English Bible,* pp. 34, 35.

5 See Milligan, *Here and There with the Papyri,* pp. 27, 115, etc.

tied or sewed together at the edge, as our books are bound. A manuscript in this book form is called a *codex.*

Leaving out the vast number of others, we mention five great uncial manuscripts (codices) which are of supreme value and interest:[6] (1) Codex Sinaiticus, or ℵ (Aleph). It was discovered by Tischendorf in a monastery at Mt. Sinai in 1844, and was finally obtained by him and brought to St. Petersburg in 1859. It probably goes back to the fourth century. It is nearly the complete Bible, containing both the Septuagint (Old Testament in Greek) and the New Testament. (2) Codex Alexandrinus, or A. It was presented to Charles I of England in 1627 by the Patriarch of Constantinople and is now in the British Museum. It belongs probably to the fourth or fifth century. It has the Septuagint and New Testament, but some portions are missing. (3) Codex Vaticanus, or B. This was brought to Rome by Nicholas V in 1448 and catalogued in the Vatican Library in 1475. It was jealously guarded, but was at last photographed and is thus accessible. It contains the whole Bible with some gaps, and probably belongs to the fourth century, and is considered the oldest. (4) Codex Ephræmi, or C. This is a palimpsest; that is, a manuscript on which the New Testament had been written and erased and something

[6] Many treatises, but see especially Price, *Ancestry of Our English Bible,* pp. 141-157, for an illuminating and accurate discussion.

else had been written over it; but by care and patience the New Testament text can be deciphered. It is in Paris at the National Library. It is incomplete and probably belongs to the fifth century. (5) Codex Bezæ, or D. This was presented by Theodore Beza to Cambridge University in 1581, he having obtained it at Lyons. It has many interpolations, but is valuable and probably belongs to the fifth century.

Printed Editions

As noted before, the Arabian conquest of Egypt about A.D. 640 led to the disappearance of papyrus from use as writing material, because the conquerors forbade the export of the plant. Later the manufacture of paper was introduced into Europe from the Orient, and at first was used for the writing and copying of less valuable documents, parchment being used for the more important. The practice of stamping ornamental letters was begun early in the fifteenth century and was soon developed into printing from movable types. There is dispute as to where and by whom the first real printing was done; but certainly among the earliest, if not the first, were Gutenberg and his helper Fust at Mainz (Mayence). Here the first complete book was printed; and it was the Bible in the Latin translation known as the Vulgate. It took five years to print it, and it was published about 1455. Of course there

were many errors, and the edition is of no value except historic and sentimental. After this the printing of the Bible went on with great rapidity and has never ceased. It was printed in the original Hebrew and Greek and in all the various translations and revisions as these were made.

The first printing of the Hebrew text was an edition of the Psalms which appeared in 1477.[7] The first complete Hebrew Bible was printed in Italy in 1488. Then came the famous Complutensian Polyglot at Alcalà, Spain, in 1514-1517. About the same date came the edition of Daniel Bomberg, at Venice, and this has been the basis of the best modern editions. The first Hebrew Bible printed in America appeared at Philadelphia in 1811.

The first Greek New Testament to be printed was that brought out by the famous Dutch scholar Erasmus and published at Basel in 1516.[8] He had only a few (eighteen) manuscripts to print from and these were not the best; so that the first edition was full of errors which were reduced in number in four successive editions. The famous French scholar and printer Robert Stephens (Étienne), assisted by his son Henry, brought out several editions, of which the most important was that of 1550.

7 See Price, *Ancestry of Our English Bible,* pp. 35 ff.

8 Strictly speaking there had been some fragments printed before; and the Greek New Testament part of the Complutensian Polyglot was actually printed in 1514-1517, but was not pubished till 1522. See Price, *Ancestry of Our English Bible,* p. 189; and Gregory, *Canon and Text of the New Testament,* pp. 437 ff.

Several editions were gotten out by Theodore Beza between 1565 and 1598. The celebrated family and firm of Elzevir at Leyden and Amsterdam published many notable books including several editions of the Greek New Testament. The most famous of these was the so-called Received Text of 1633. The modern critical editions have been based on these and greatly helped by the discovery and careful study and comparison of many manuscripts which the earlier editors did not have. Among German scholars are the great names of Lachmann and Tischendorf, among the earlier, and of Nestle among the later students, who devoted great and painstaking care to getting a more ancient and purer text. In England the way was led by Tregelles who published his monumental edition of the Greek text between 1857 and 1872. F. H. Scrivener published several editions of the Received Text with the various readings of textual scholars printed in the margin. Then came the great work of Westcott and Hort, eminent and devout scholars of the Church of England, who devoted years of consecrated labor to the noble task of getting the purest possible text. Their edition of the Greek Testament was first published in 1881, but was permitted to be used in advance by the Revisers.

Of English translations the first to be printed was that of Tyndale, the New Testament in 1525-1526, the whole Bible in 1531. Others followed,

and then came the King James Version in 1611, the Revised Version of the New Testament in 1881 and the Old Testament in 1885, and the American Standard Version in 1901.

The printed editions, as we are familiar with them, have the divisions into chapters and verses;[9] but these were not made by the inspired writers and do not appear in the ancient manuscripts. There were various sorts of divisions for worship and reading, but the first arrangement into chapters, almost as we have them, was introduced early in the thirteenth century. Verse divisions came much later; in the New Testament first in Stephens' edition of 1551, and of the whole Bible in an edition of the Vulgate in 1555.

The Text of Scripture

After all this copying and recopying, translating and revising, printing and reprinting, we have in hand a copy of the Bible, with its sixty-six books, divided into chapters and verses, all ready to read and study in the assured belief that it is the inspired and authoritative Word of God. But how are we sure? Have we good reason to believe that we have what the original writers actually wrote? And have we good reason to believe that these sixty-six books, no more and no less, really make up a true and authentic revelation of God? Yes; both.

9 See Gregory, *Canon and Text*, pp. 473 ff.

As to the actual writings, say of Jeremiah with the help of Baruch, and of Paul with the help of Tertius, how do we know that we have them? Of course it must be evident that in the copying and printing, and especially the copying, many errors were made. No copying is likely to be exact in every letter and dot, and as for mistakes in printing we are only too familiar with them. So it is easy to understand that both the manuscripts and the various printed editions of the Scriptures show a vast number and a great variety of different readings, both as regards words and sentences and in a few cases of longer passages. It is true that we have no manuscript of the Hebrew Old Testament of earlier date than the tenth century; but we know that the Jews copied with exceeding care, and a comparison of such manuscripts as remain, by the most painstaking study of competent and pious scholars, brings out the fact that the variations are comparatively few,[10] of slight importance and in no way invalidate any important fact or teaching of the Old Testament. We have the same text that Jesus and the apostles had.

With regard to the New Testament the case is different both as to the number and date of manuscripts and as to the consequent numbe

[10] Dr. Price (*Ancestry of Our English Bible*, p. 38), says: "Kennicott and de Rossi together compared 1,346 different Hebrew manuscripts of the Old Testament, and 342 reported editions, or 1,688 different manuscripts. The value of their work is seen in that it showed that the underlying Hebrew of all the manuscripts examined by these two scholars and their assistants was practically on the same text

and importance of the variations. Many of these are due to obvious errors such as we are familiar with and correct at a glance. Of course these do not count. But in some cases the differences are of real importance. What then? As a rule the older manuscripts are more apt to be correct because nearer to the sources; but sometimes a late manuscript may be a good copy of a very early one. Much study has also established the *character* of certain manuscripts as being more trustworthy than others. And then the very number of manuscripts (greater than for any other ancient book or collection) makes the comparison very wide, and so the manuscripts are corrected by each other. Then much use has been made of the old translations and of quotations in early Christian writers. Hence we may say that, in the wonderful providence of God, the patient and intelligent toil of scholars has given us a remarkably accurate text.

Westcott and Hort in the Introduction to their edition of the Greek New Testament (page 2) say that the proportion of words about which there is no reasonable doubt is not less than seven-eighths. Of the eighth remaining most of the variations are trivial. Only about one-sixteenth of the words of the New Testament are subject to doubt, and of these the most part are of little comparative importance. Their conclusion is "that the amount of what can in any sense be called substantial variation is but a small

fraction of the whole residuary variation, and can hardly form more than a thousandth part of the entire text." Such a result is amazing, little short of miraculous. It shows with what wonderful care God has preserved his Word. Some examples illustrate. Certain interpolations are (King James): John 5:3, 4 (ℵ, A, B, C, and others); Acts 8:37 wanting in all the oldest and best manuscripts and versions. This was arbitrarily inserted by Erasmus. Doubtful passages are John 7:53–8:11; Mark 16:9-20. In sum: No essential fact or doctrine of the New Testament is put in doubt by any or all of these differences of reading in the ancient manuscripts; and no other book or collection of books in all the literature of ancient times has so well attested a text as the Bible.

Chapter III

ORIGINAL LANGUAGES AND TRANSLATIONS

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One of the most valuable and fascinating of studies is that of language. As in case of every other science there is a great body of facts and a great array of problems. Over against the much we know is the more we do not know. And as in all other sciences we must be careful to distinguish between facts and theories in regard to the origin and development of human language and its many varieties. The word "language" itself means "the use of the tongue," and the word "tongue" is also often figuratively used for what the tongue, aided by other vocal organs, expresses in sound, in words. Thus the idea of a word is first a sound chiefly produced by the tongue and is intended to convey thought. Then we have written language; that is, the use of signs and marks to show to the eye what has been or may be uttered by the tongue. Then the writing down of these letters and words and preserving them upon papyrus and skins came in due time and we have manuscripts; and then came printing and books. Now many of the ancient languages, in the exact forms used by different races and groups of men, have passed out

of use both in speech and writing; but many interesting and valuable specimens of their literature have come down to us. Thus we have our Old Testament in Hebrew, and our New Testament in Greek; and from these translations into other tongues.

The Old Testament Hebrew

The ancient Hebrew tongue in which the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament were written and are preserved in printed form, long ago ceased to be spoken and written as a living language. This came about through the captivity of a great body of the Jews in Babylon, the overrunning of the native land by other peoples, and the dispersion of multitudes of Hebrews through all lands. As we have seen they were most careful to copy and preserve their sacred writings in the ancient tongue, and these Scriptures we have to-day. The language which immediately, but gradually perhaps, followed the ancient Hebrew was a closely kindred speech or dialect variously called Syrian, Chaldee, and Aramaic—the last term being that now generally employed by scholars as the most accurate. It is interesting to note that this tongue appears in a few passages of the Old Testament written during the captivity.[1] In modern times the only living

[1] Daniel 2:4 to 7:28; Ezra 4:8 to 6:18; 7:12-26; Jeremiah 10:11.

speech akin to Hebrew is the Yiddish, which is printed in Hebrew characters and spoken chiefly in Eastern Europe. *The Standard Dictionary* states that it is only twenty per cent Hebrew, being seventy per cent German and ten per cent Slavic. The Hebrew alphabet consisted of twenty-two letters, the first two of which א, ב, (aleph, beth) passed into Greek as *alpha, beta,* and give us our word "alphabet" as the name for the list of letters in any language. All the Hebrew letters were consonants except two א (aleph) and ע (ayin) which seem anciently to have had some consonantal value, but it has been lost and they survive merely as signs under which to write or print the vowel points. The vowels had to be supplied by the reader. It was not until the Middle Ages (probably somewhere between the sixth and the eighth century A.D.) that the vowel points were invented and written with the consonants in order to preserve or harmonize the pronunciation. The lines in Hebrew writing and printing run from right to left, instead of left to right as with us. The letters have few curves and are square, stiff and ungraceful. As now written and printed with the vowel points the Hebrew is somewhat difficult to learn and read. But there is much satisfaction in knowing even a little of it, since that little may help to a better understanding of the Old Testament.

The language has many beauties, and even a

slight acquaintance with it shows what an admirable vehicle it was for conveying the truths of God to the people who spoke and wrote it. Its narrative style is marked by great simplicity, directness and charm. Its oratorical portions, in Deuteronomy, the Prophets, and occasional speeches in the narrative, are full of imagination, force, and appeal. Its poetry is rhythmic without being confined to measured feet, and rimes in thought rather than in sound, a method known as "parallelism." Because of the influence of the Bible some Hebrew words, phrases, and modes of expression have been adopted and perpetuated in English and other modern tongues.

The New Testament Greek

Any one who knows anything of history or literature does not need to be told that Greek is one of the greatest languages of all time. It is absurd to speak of it as a "dead language." It has passed through many changes in form and structure, but still it is very much alive and has been so for more than three thousand years. Dr. A. T. Robertson in his great *Grammar of the New Testament Greek* (page 43), says: "The following is a tentative outline: The Mycenæan Age, 2000 B.C. to 1000 B.C.; the Age of the Dialects, 1000 B.C. to 300 B.C.; the Age of the *κοινή*, 300 B.C. to 330 A.D.; the Byzantine Greek, 330 A.D. to 1453 A.D.; and modern Greek, 1453 A.D. to

the present time." Certainly during these long ages there have been many changes in the language both as spoken and as written. The language of the newspapers sold on the streets of Athens to-day differs in many details from that of the Greeks who talked and wrote centuries before Homer composed his immortal poems, but it is historically and organically the same language. There are many ways in which the language of these various ages has been preserved. There is a great body of inscriptions of various sorts which have been deciphered and read, there are many earthen vessels on which sentences and names have been stamped (called *ostraka*), there are thousands of unliterary papyri, such as accounts, statements, etc. Then there are the manuscripts on papyrus and parchment, and lastly printed books, as we have already seen.

The New Testament writings, as we know, were preserved chiefly in vellum or parchment manuscripts, but with some papyri, till the invention of printing. The language of the New Testament as compared with that of the time of the great Attic writers shows that it was the language of the day—the "common" tongue which was spoken and written by the people throughout the world in the time of our Lord and his Apostles. Through the conquests of Alexander and the commerce and intellectual activity of the Greek-speaking people, their language has become a world-speech. In the providence of God,

at that particular time, this wonderful language was ready to be the medium for communicating his gospel to mankind. It is believed with good reason that our Lord Jesus spoke Greek, but how much in comparison with the Aramaic vernacular it is impossible to determine. The Epistle of James, his half-brother, is written in excellent Greek; and, as we know, all the New Testament writings are in that language, even if it be possible that a story of his life (some say the basis of Matthew's Gospel) was originally written in Aramaic. Dr. Robertson says (page 21): "The New Testament Greek will no longer be despised as inferior or unclassical. It will be seen to be a vital part of the great current of the Greek language." Milligan has shown how the language of the papyri, in the common Greek, sheds much and valuable light on many terms and usages in the New Testament.[2]

Translation into Other Languages

Both the differences and the similarities between languages are subjects of profound and fascinating interest. The differences make translation at once necessary and difficult, but the similarities make it possible and sometimes easy. Only comparatively few people can or will, at any given time, take the pains to learn Hebrew and Greek so as to read what God has revealed

2 *Here and There Among the Papyri,* p. 63 ff.

to man in the Bible. Hence the need of translation from Hebrew and Greek into other languages was early felt and acted on and has gone on and on with the progress of Christianity until now it is said that there are about seven hundred languages and dialects into which the Bible has been translated. Besides this there are in many cases different translations into the same language.

Now translation from one language to another is sometimes easy, often difficult, and occasionally impossible. The last occurs when the meaning of the word [3] or phrase has been lost, or the shade of meaning or usage in word or phrase is peculiar to one language and cannot be expressed by the same terms in another, but only by a paraphrase, more or less clumsy. These peculiarities of word, construction, phrase and shades of meaning, are called idioms, and require very careful study.[4] But these differences are comparatively few; and fewer still are of special importance. It is often a question of preference and hard to decide, where any one of several meanings is possible and all are acceptable. As in the case of the text these comparatively few difficulties only emphasize the wonder that in so

3 Algum, or almug, trees (1 Kings 10:11, 12; 2 Chronicles 2:8); and pannag (Ezekiel 27:17); and many uncertain terms and phrases.

4 Illustrate by "hand," in Greek χείρ, in Hebrew יָד. There is no trouble whatever on the literal meaning, and the translation is easy and exact. But in figurative uses and shades of meaning differences arise. Some of these occur in all three languages, with only slight differences, and some in two out of the three. But "fill the hand," meaning consecrate (Exodus 28:41); a "hand," meaning a body of men, especially soldiers; and a "hand," meaning a laborer, are idioms.

many different tongues we can and do have the imperishable Word of God.

Among the many translations of the Bible only a few of the most important and notable need to be mentioned here, reserving the English versions (except Wiclif) for another chapter. There are four great history-making versions: (1) The Septuagint (LXX)—Old Testament into Greek, between 285 and 130 B.C.; (2) The Vulgate—whole Bible into Latin, by Jerome, about 383 to 404 A.D.; (3) Wiclif's Bible—Vulgate into English, 1384; (4) Luther's Bible—whole Bible into German, 1522 to 1534.

The first of these is the ancient translation of the Old Testament into Greek, and is known as the Septuagint (LXX, or Seventy) from a tradition that it was the work of seventy scholars. It was done at Alexandria during the years 285 to 130 B.C., largely during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus.[5] Dr. Sampey says: "The Greek of the LXX is far removed from the classic idiom. Different books of the Bible evidently fell into different hands, and while some of the translators knew Hebrew quite well, and Greek tolerably well, others were not at home in either language. Most of the translators were quite faithful to the original Hebrew, while others leaned toward a paraphrase. The Pentateuch is best rendered. The Book of Daniel is the worst. The Apostles quote quite frequently from the Sep-

[5] *Syllabus*, p. 14.

tuagint, and the idiom of the New Testament Greek (*Koine*) is anticipated, for the most part, in this early Greek translation." It was widely used among the Jews both in Palestine and in the Dispersion and is often quoted in the New Testament.

We must pass by the Targums (Aramaic paraphrases of some of the Old Testament books), and the Syriac and other oriental versions; also the Gothic version of Ulfilas. All of these are full of interest and value.

Of special importance is the so-called Vulgate, the Latin translation made by the famous scholar Jerome (Hieronymus) in the fourth century.[6] It was a revision of earlier Latin versions, opposed by many, but accepted by the Roman Church and finally adopted by the Council of Trent as the standard of the Roman Catholic Church. It was practically the only Bible for ages, and the basis of many versions.

Wiclif, the English priest, translated the Vulgate into English and it was published about 1384, of course in manuscript form. It was really the first properly English version, and has a great place in history, as the beginning of a mighty religious and Biblical movement.[7]

One of the best services rendered the cause of the Reformation was the translation of the Bible into German by Martin Luther. From the Gothic

6 See Price, *Ancestry of Our English Bible*, Ch. VII, p. 74 ff.
7 *Ibid.*, Ch. XX, p. 218 ff., and many others.

of Ulfilas there had been German versions, and some of these Luther used. He depended largely on the Vulgate, but translated directly from the Hebrew and Greek. His New Testament was done in three months and appeared in 1522, the Old Testament in 1534, and revised in 1545.[8]

"The richest fruit of Luther's leisure in the Wartburg, and the most important and useful work of his whole life, is the translation of the New Testament, by which he brought the teaching and example of Christ and the Apostles to the mind and heart of the Germans in life-like reproduction. It was a republication of the gospel. He made the Bible the people's book in church, school, and house. If he had done nothing else, he would be one of the greatest benefactors of the German-speaking race. His version was followed by Protestant versions in other languages, especially the French, Dutch, and English. The Bible ceased to be a foreign book in a foreign tongue, and became naturalized, and hence far more clear and dear to the common people. Hereafter the Reformation depended no longer on the works of the Reformers, but on the book of God, which everybody could read for himself as his daily guide in spiritual life. This inestimable blessing of an open Bible for all, without the permission or intervention of pope or priest, marks an immense advance in church history, and can never be lost."

8 See Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. VI, p. 340 ff.

Chapter IV

THE BIBLE IN ENGLISH

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The English language as spoken and written to-day in its native home of England, and throughout the countries politically and commercially connected with the parent state, and in our own great country and its dependencies, is a wonder of the world. The ancient Briton who dwelt in Albion's isle has left a few old words to remind us of himself, then came the Angles and Saxons and laid the foundations of our speech in enduring words and forms, and then the conquering Norman imposed his graceful romance dialect upon the Anglo-Saxon basis, and these were scarcely fitted into one before the scholars of the Revival of Letters opened the treasures of ancient Latin and Greek to enrich the growing structure with pillars of strength and ornaments of beauty, and last came the filling and furnishing of the majestic palace with materials which colonization and commerce and travel have brought from every shore. About midway of this marvelous history the first full translation of the Bible into English appeared in Wiclif's version in 1384. Since that time the place of the Bible in the English language and its literature

has been one of commanding influence and of wide and varied importance. The story has been often and well told and is of fascinating and fadeless interest.[1]

The Early Versions

In the Anglo-Saxon period of English history preceding the Norman conquest in 1066 there were several attempts to paraphrase and to translate portions of the Bible into the language of the people.[2] First was the poet cowherd Cædmon who paraphrased into rude verse, about A.D. 670, parts of the Bible as furnished him by the monks. Bishops Aldhelm and Egbert later put the Psalms and Gospels into Saxon. The story of the Venerable Bede (674-735) and his translation of the Gospel of John, finishing it just before he died, is full of interest and pathos. The efforts of good King Alfred (848-901) to carry forward the work of translating the Bible into Saxon were checked by the Danish invasions. Later there were translations and paraphrases of the Psalms and Gospels and some other books, but the Saxon translations naturally ceased with the Norman Conquest (1066), and the fusion of Saxon and Norman into English

1 There is a whole library of books on the subject. *Our Grand Old Bible,* by William Muir, tells the story well. A short popular account from the English standpoint is that of J. Paterson Smyth, *How We Got Our Bible.* The best for Americans is the able, scholarly and accurate work of Prof. Ira M. Price, *The Ancestry of Our English Bible.*

2 See Price, *Ancestry,* etc., p. 207 ff.; and J. Paterson Smyth, *How We Got Our Bible,* pp. 42-58.

could hardly be said to be accomplished till the time of Chaucer and Wiclif after the middle of the fourteenth century. Then came Wiclif's translation from the Vulgate completed and published in manuscript about the time of his death in 1384.[3]

The next great name in connection with English Bible translation is that of William Tyndale (1484-1536). Educated at Oxford and Cambridge, he was a competent scholar and master of seven languages. He early conceived the idea of a printed translation from the originals, and lived and died to accomplish it. The following saying of his to a priest became famous: "If God spare my life, ere many years I will cause a boy that driveth a plow in England shall know more of the Scriptures than thou doest." He knew he could not publish it in England, so went to Europe when the New Testament was ready to print. He went to several places and finally published it at Worms in 1525. Many copies went to England. They made a sensation. Tunstall, Bishop of London, bought up many of these and burnt them, but this helped rather than hurt. Tyndale worked on the Old Testament with the help of Rogers. This was brought out in part in 1531, but was completed only after his death

3 Price (*Ancestry*, p. 227), says: "The great service done the English language and the English people by Wycliffe's combination and crystallization of the various dialects of England in his translation cannot be overestimated. He practically unified the various related tongues of England, and made them one for the future use of the English-speaking and writing world."

under the name of "Matthew's Bible." Tyndale was much persecuted and finally was betrayed and died at the stake in 1536, praying: "May God open the King of England's eyes." This version was really the foundation of all that followed, and much of its language survives in the King James and the Revised.

A number of versions followed. People demanded the Word. The Reformation was on and church authorities had to heed. Tyndale's Bible was completed in course of time and Coverdale's followed, which was the first complete Bible in English, but was translated from the Latin, German, etc. This helped on and had some good points, which influenced later versions. Meantime church authorities put out various editions, mostly revisions of the preceding. "The Great Bible," "The Bishops' Bible," and others appeared. The most important of these was the version chiefly produced at Geneva by exiles during Mary's reign, and hence was called the "Geneva Bible." This was published in 1560, and was chiefly based on Tyndale. It had notes which were not acceptable to the high church and royal feelings, and this was one of the things which led to the revision under King James. It was up to date the best version of the Bible in English.[4]

[4] Paterson Smyth (p. 122), says: "It was the first Bible that laid aside the old black letter for the present Roman type. It was also the first to recognize the divisions into verses, and the first to omit the Apocrypha. It omits the name of St. Paul from the Epistle to the Hebrews, and it uses italics for all words not occurring in the original."

The King James Version

On the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603 the succession to the throne of England reverted to the son of her rival, Mary Queen of Scots. This was James VI of Scotland who now became James I of the United Kingdom of Great Britain. He was a man of many peculiarities, abundant weaknesses and some high qualities, and was well hit off by Henry IV of France as "the wisest fool in Christendom." His courage was little, but his conceit immense. Among other things he thought himself to be a great scholar and theologian, and not altogether without reason. On coming to the throne he found the religious as well as the political affairs of the realm in great confusion among the various sects and parties. He called a conference in 1604 at Hampton Court of the chief dignitaries of the Church to consider the problems of the time. At this conference it was pointed out that one of the causes of the difficulties was the existence and circulation of a number of rival translations of the Bible; and it was suggested that a new or revised translation, prepared and issued under royal patronage and authority, would be a great achievement in itself and would go far toward producing unity of worship.

Dr. Paterson Smyth says:[5] "There was one man in that assembly who looked with special

[5] *How We Got Our Bible*, p. 127.

favor on the new proposal, and that man was the royal pedant who presided. A Bible translation made under his auspices would greatly add to the glory of his reign, besides which, to a man whose learning was really considerable, and who was specially fond of displaying it in theological matters, the direction of such work would be very congenial. And if a further motive were needed, it was easily found in his unconcealed dislike to the popular Geneva Bible. The whole tone of its politics and theology, as exhibited in the marginal notes, was utterly distasteful to James." So James caught at the idea of the new translation and proceeded to make very excellent arrangements for putting the plan into execution. No doubt he took counsel with others, but to a very large degree the credit for the methods of procedure goes to the king himself. Fifty-four scholars were selected to do the work, though but forty-seven names appear at the end—perhaps some had died or ceased from active work. They were selected from both the High Church and the Puritan parties, and some laymen were included. To quote Dr. Smyth again:[6] "An admirable set of rules was drawn up for the instruction of the revisers, directing amongst other things that the Bishops' Bible should be used as a basis, and departed from only when the text required it; that any competent scholars might be consulted about special difficulties; that dif-

[6] *How We Got Our Bible*, p. 129.

ferences of opinion should be settled at a general meeting; that divisions of chapters should be as little changed as possible, and marginal references should be given from one scripture to another; and last, but by no means least, there should be no marginal notes, except for the explanation of Hebrew and Greek words."

The revisers were divided into six working groups, two meeting at Westminster, two at Oxford, and two at Cambridge. Each group had its assigned portion, and when all was ready two members of each group were appointed as a final committee to go over the whole, bring it into harmony and prepare it for the press. It took about six years to complete the great task, and the work was carefully and ably done. The version was published in one folio volume in 1611. The still familiar title page described it as "The Holy Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments: translated out of the original tongues; and with the former translations diligently compared and revised, by His Majesty's special command." To this was added: "Appointed to be read in churches." To this title and not any law or order is probably due the fact that it came to be called The Authorized Version. Muir puts the case thus:[7] "Matthew's Bible of 1537 was licensed by the King, and the Great Bible was specially sanctioned by proclamation. The Bishops' Bible was duly approved by Convoca-

[7] *Our Grand Old Bible*, p. 139.

tion; and, as the legal successor of the Great Bible, inherited its royal authority. The version of 1611, however, although it was begun and carried through with the hearty benediction of King James, seems never to have obtained any other authorization than that of public appreciation; that of the favor of scholars and people alike. The King's connection with the inauguration of the movement in 1604; the Dedication which it has always borne on the forefront; the statement on the title page that it is appointed to be read in churches; even the fact that it could be printed only by permission of the Crown—all helped to confirm the belief of many that in some literal and distinctive fashion it was made the Authorized Version. But difficult as it is to prove a negative, and we know singularly little about various important aspects of this translation, it is practically certain that no such authorization was ever given."

The text of the Old Testament was that of the four available printed Hebrew Bibles of the time; and of the New Testament was that of Theodore Beza, as he had revised those of Erasmus and Stephens. It was the best that could be done. But the text was of course not based on the older manuscripts, many of which have been discovered since their time. Of the translation Dr. Price says:[8] "The Old Testament far surpassed any English translation in its faithful

8 *Ancestry*, etc., p. 278 f.

presentation of the Hebrew text, and did it in a simplicity of language admirably representative of the Elizabethan age. The New Testament is so chaste and expressive in language and form that it is even said to surpass the original Greek as a piece of literature." This is the Bible that we know and love, that for more than three hundred years has been the accepted Word of God among those who use the English tongue in all parts of the world. It has passed into the literature, thought and life of English-speaking peoples as no other book has done. "It has endeared itself to the hearts and lives of millions of Christians."

The Revised Version

With all its great and conceded excellence the King James Version could not, in the nature of things, be accepted as final. At least three outstanding and sufficient reasons imperatively demanded a revision: (1) The text, especially of the New Testament, and to some extent of the Old Testament, needed thorough revision in the light of the new knowledge from older and better manuscripts and the development of the science of textual criticism. Not one of the four great uncial manuscripts—ℵ A B C—had been brought to light when the King James Version was made. And besides these ancient copies many others have been found and used in order

to get a more ancient and accurate text than was possible to the scholars who prepared that version. (2) The King James translators were not infallible, and some errors or infelicities in translation called for correction. (3) The English language since 1611 had undergone many changes, and some words and phrases in the King James Version were no longer in use or had so altered in meaning as to convey the wrong sense. Hence there grew up throughout the English-speaking world among students and lovers of the Bible a strong feeling that amounted to a conviction that in the interest of a better understanding of the Word of God there should be a revision of the Authorized Version which should appeal not only to scholars but to the millions of readers of the Bible in English.

The story of how this sentiment came to fruition in the Revised Version in England and in the American Standard Version in the United States is a great and worthy one.[9] Only the outlines can be given here. On February 10, 1870, at a meeting of the Convocation of Canterbury of the Church of England Bishop Wilberforce of Winchester moved that a revision of the New Testament be undertaken by joint action of the two Convocations (Canterbury and York). Amendment was made to include the Old Testa-

[9] See the Prefaces to *The Revised New Testament* (1881), *The Completed Bible* (1885), and *The American Standard Edition* (1901); J. Paterson Smyth, *How We Got Our Bible*, pp. 133 ff.; and best of all Price, *Ancestry*, etc., Ch. XXX, p. 283 ff.; Muir, *Our Grand Old Bible*, p. 201 ff.

ment. Thus, as was fitting, the Church of England took the lead. The Committee of Revision was later appointed and authorized to secure the coöperation of scholars from other religious bodies. This was done and fifty-four (just as for the King James Version) were selected. They were also authorized to invite the coöperation of American scholars. So in each country there were appointed committees on the Old Testament and on the New Testament. They worked long and faithfully, and finally in May, 1881, the Revised New Testament appeared in England. It had enormous sale in both countries. In 1885 the Old Testament was completed, and the whole Bible published. Well says Professor Price:[10] "The Revised Version was produced by the hearty coöperation and skill of about seventy-five of the leading Biblical scholars of Great Britain and America, who represented the most prominent religious bodies of the two great English-speaking countries. The age of the Authorized Version, its antiquated language, and its recognized defects of several kinds, were some of the reasons for the production of a modern version of the Bible. Thus the sentiment and scholarship of the age demanded a revision, and the best critical and exegetical scholarship of the times produced it."

The coöperation of the American committees was very important and helpful, but it was nat-

10 *Ancestry*, etc., p. 296.

ural that there was much difference of opinion. Many changes advocated by the Americans were unacceptable to the British revisers. By agreement a number of these were printed as an appendix. It was further agreed that the Americans would back the English revision and refrain from publishing an edition of their own for fourteen years. The English committees disbanded, but the American Committee maintained its organization, and at the end of the allotted time (1901) put out the American Standard Version through the great Bible House of Thomas Nelson and Sons of New York. This not only included the original American preferences, but revised and enlarged them to great advantage. The result is the best all-around English translation in existence. Professor Price thus sums up:[11] "The Standard American Edition of the Revised Version, authorized by the American Committee of Revision, was published August 26, 1901, by Thomas Nelson and Sons of New York City. It embodies the ripest scholarship of Great Britain and America (1881-1885), fully revised and corrected (1901) to suit it to the demands and requirements of American Bible students and readers. As it now stands it is the most perfect English Bible in existence, and will be the standard version for English readers for decades to come."

11 *Ancestry*, etc., p. 304.

Other Versions in English

Individuals or groups here and there have made other versions of the Scripture into English. Some of these have been of the Old Testament or parts or books of the Old Testament, but naturally they are chiefly of the New Testament. Of these several are worthy of special mention.

The Bible Union Version of the New Testament is part of the great work of Bible Revision undertaken by the American Bible Union (Baptist) about the middle of the nineteenth century. Various books were issued from time to time. The American Baptist Publication Society brought out a final edition of this New Testament as revised by Drs. Hovey, Broadus, and Weston. It is a faithful, almost literal, translation.

The Twentieth Century New Testament also is a translation directly from the best critical text. It is clear and suggestive; but takes many liberties in paraphrasing and interpreting, and on the whole is *too* modern; not always dignified. It was issued anonymously and tentatively. Still it has some value.

A New Translation of the New Testament, by James Moffat, is enjoying considerable vogue at present and is helpful as a reference. But it also takes too many liberties both with text and meaning. It helps, but is not always safe.

The New Testament in Modern Speech, by R. F. Weymouth, is better than the two preced-

ing. It is up to date as to text and language, more scholarly than the Twentieth Century, and safer than Moffatt. It is really an excellent version and will be found very helpful for comparative use.

Another recent version is *The New Testament, An American Translation,* by Prof. Edgar J. Goodspeed, of the University of Chicago. Like those of Moffatt and Weymouth this is a scholarly and careful translation, based on the best text and adapted to modern speech, especially the English as we Americans use it. But it also reflects the personal preferences of the translator, showing some liberties taken with both text and language. But on the whole it compares favorably with the others, and has some excellencies of its own.

Still another new translation is *The Riverside New Testament,* by Dr. William G. Ballantine, formerly of Oberlin Seminary and Oberlin College. The translation is faithful and closer to the original text than the others mentioned. It is printed in very attractive and readable form.

All these translations are helpful as references, but none equals the American Standard Version for steady use.

Chapter V

CONTENTS OF THE BIBLE

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Having studied the interesting processes by which the Bible has come down to us in the noble form with which we are most familiar, it may be helpful at this point to make a brief general survey of our priceless heritage. Let us joyously accept it as a treasure and rejoice in its possession. Let us leave disputed questions, whether critical or doctrinal, and simply refresh our memories as to what we have in this very remarkable collection of sixty-six ancient writings of vastly differing date and authorship. There is nothing new to say on a topic that has been threshed out again and again from every possible point of view, and on the details of which critical and doctrinal opinions widely differ. It seems only fair and candid to say that without argument this treatise assumes the point of view of the conservative, evangelical group of scholars, and from that standpoint the following review is made. The writer makes no claim to expert scholarship, but he has given for a lifetime some attention to the studies and results of Bible learning. The simple task attempted here is to put before others, who also are not technical

scholars, a condensed descriptive account of the contents and character of the Bible as a whole.

The Old Testament

This name has been given to that collection of thirty-nine books originally written in Hebrew which the Jews accepted as their divinely given and sacred Scriptures. They came to be collectively referred to as the Scriptures or Writings. Our Lord so speaks of them in several places, sometimes in the singular and sometimes in the plural. (Matt. 21:42; Mark 14:49; John 5:39; 7:38; 10:35.) Paul also uses this term quite frequently. (See Romans 1:2; 4:3; 1 Cor. 15:3, 4; 2 Tim. 3:15.) In 2 Corinthians 3:14 Paul speaks of the Scriptures collectively as "the old covenant," and in verse six he has already spoken of the Christian dispensation as a "new covenant." We have here no doubt the origin of the names "Old Testament" and "New Testament," as descriptive of the two groups of sacred writings. The word in Hebrew is *b'rith,* a covenant, which is usually translated into the Greek *diatheké,* and into the Latin *testamentum.* In both the Greek and Latin terms the idea of a will sometimes appears, and this is made the basis of an argument in Hebrews 9:15-20. But the more usual meaning is that of a covenant granted or imposed by God himself, only ac-

cepted and entered into by the human receivers of it. By a very natural turn of thought the books, or collections of books, which contain this covenant (or gracious promise of God) came itself to be called "the covenant." Following Paul's usage the ancient scriptures were therefore the Old Covenant, and after him when the Christian scriptures came also to be accepted as divinely given, they were called the New Covenant. This usage, it appears, goes back at least as far as the second century. With regard to the name, Bishop Westcott says:[1] "The establishment of Christianity gave at once a distinct unity to the former dispensation, and thus St. Paul could speak of the Jewish Scriptures by the name which they have always retained since, as 'the Old Testament' or 'covenant' (2 Cor. 3:14). . . . At the close of the second century the terms 'Old' and 'New Testament' were already in common use." In discussing the various terms Massie in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible* (Vol. IV, page 721), says: "Finally, as a consequence, *testamentum* became the title of the documents containing the attested promises of blessings used by God and bequeathed to us in the death of Christ."

The division of the writings of the Old Testament into thirty-nine books, and the names given to them, is largely the work of the Hebrew edi-

[1] As quoted by Dr. James Orr, *The Problem of the Old Testament*, p. 3, note.

tors and scribes at various dates. In most cases the books are distinct either by authorship or by character and contents, but in a few cases this does not hold. For example, the four books of 1 and 2 Samuel and 1 and 2 Kings really constitute one treatise. So also the two books of Chronicles are not sharply or clearly distinguished. There are other cases where the divisions made by the Hebrew editors are open to some question. But there is no good reason to disturb the now generally accepted arrangement either in the interest of critical theory or of editorial sense of propriety.

The grouping of the thirty-nine writings of the Old Testament as we have it in our Bibles is different from that of the Hebrew writers. In the Hebrew Bibles as now printed the books are arranged in four groups: (1) The Law, or Pentateuch, or Five Books of Moses; (2) The Earlier Prophets, Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings; (3) The Later Prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; (4) The Writings (or in their Greek term *Hagiographa*), Psalms, Proverbs, Job, The Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, 1 and 2 Chronicles. It will be seen at once that this arrangement is arbitrary. It does not follow a natural grouping or historical sequence. It has therefore been wisely abandoned

by accepted usage. The arrangement with which we are familiar grew into gradual use after the Christian era. On the whole it is a better arrangement than that of the Hebrew editors. But it has no divine authority and might be improved in some particulars; but, as has been said, there does not appear to be sufficient reason for changing.

As we have it, therefore, the first group is the Pentateuch (a Greek word meaning "five books"), and including Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. This preserves the ancient arrangement, giving us the five books commonly attributed to Moses as author or editor, collectively called by the Hebrews "The Torah," or Law. The names of the books are Greek, and were given by the translators of the Septuagint or by common consent among the Jews of the Dispersion. The Hebrew names were taken from the first words of the books. Thus Genesis is known among the Hebrews as *B'reshith,* "In the Beginning"; Exodus is called *We-elleh-shemoth,* "And these are the names," and so on. Genesis is the Greek word for origin or birth; Exodus means "a way out" or "departure"; Leviticus is a Greek word formed from the Hebrew name Levi, because it deals much with duties of the Levites; Numbers (in Greek *Arithmoi*) is so named because of the numberings of the people; Deuteronomy comes from two Greek words "second" and "law," and is so

called because it repeats a good deal of the law as previously given.

As to the contents of the Pentateuch, Genesis gives an account of the origin of man and of the Semitic stock of Abraham and his descendants, and the beginnings of the sojourn in Egypt. It contains also some poetry, but not much. The main topic of Exodus is the story of the escape of the Israelites from Egypt and the giving of the Law at Sinai together with some accounts of the wanderings in the desert. Leviticus is almost wholly taken up with the ceremonial law prescribing many details of the worship of God to be observed by the Hebrews. In Numbers laws are also given, but there are interesting accounts of events in the history. Deuteronomy consists chiefly of addresses given by Moses on the eve of the entrance into Canaan, rehearsing much of what had previously been given.

The next great group is that which we call the Historical Books, containing Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther. In these books the history of Israel is described from the invasion of Canaan under Joshua to the return of the Jews from captivity, and the renewal of their commonwealth in the Promised Land. This great group of historical books shows how God dealt with his chosen people in making them the medium of his revelation of himself to all mankind.

Next we have the Poetical Books, Job, the Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs; and to this ought to be added the book of Lamentations, which is really poetry. Dramatic poetry is represented by Job and the Song of Songs. Lyric poetry of the highest order is found in the Psalms. Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, though mostly in poetic form, are philosophic and practical in tone, and are sometimes described as "wisdom literature." Among these poetic books the Psalms occupy a preëminent position. They have been considered by competent critics as the highest expression of lyric poetry in all literature. The religious feelings, aspirations, and reflections of the human soul find abundant and varied expression in these inspired poems. They have fed and guided the religious life of many generations. They are of varied date and authorship, but many of them undoubtedly came from the great soul of David, the king of Israel.

There remains the great group of the Prophets, from Isaiah to Malachi. It is customary to divide these into the Greater and the Minor Prophets, the former term applying to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. The first two belong to the period of Israel's later kings, and point to the approaching downfall of the kingdom of Judah and to the return of the people from captivity. The latter two belong to the period of the captivity, but point beyond that to the glories of God's kingdom through his people in the cen-

turies following the restoration of the Jewish State at Jerusalem.

The twelve Minor Prophets, from Hosea to Malachi, are so called not by way of disparagement, but because of their brevity, and relatively to the four Greater Prophets. Amos and Hosea belong to the latter times of the Northern Kingdom. Haggai and Zechariah are of the time of the Return. The others touch various dates and epochs. The last, Malachi ("my messenger") points to the coming of a new time to be heralded by a special messenger. These great writings deal with various phases of the religious life of the chosen people and point forward to the larger fulfillment of God's promises in the coming of a new dispensation.

The New Testament

For about four hundred years the voice of prophecy was silent in Israel. But the history of the Jews went on in its two great divisions of the people in Palestine and the Dispersion; that is, those who were scattered abroad throughout the nations. During the interval of about four hundred years between the closing prophecy of Malachi and the coming of John the Baptist to herald the Messiah some writings were produced by the Jews, but they have not been accepted as a part of the inspired revelation of God, though a few of them relate events of great importance

and some of them give a good deal of devotional thought and teaching. Many of these books have been grouped as forming the so-called Apocrypha. They are sometimes printed in the Bible, but for various reasons which cannot here be dealt with at length they have not obtained a place among those writings regarded as inspired by the general opinion of Christians. Many of these apocryphal books, however, are full of interest and value for the Christian student, and they should not be overlooked by those who wish to keep in touch with the history and thought of Israel during the interval between the Old and New Testaments.

As we have remarked before, the sacred books of Israel came to be called collectively the Old Covenant, or Testament. And this term prepared the way for giving the title of New Covenant, or Testament, to the group of distinctively Christian writings which make up the second part of our Bible. In the New Testament we have twenty-seven separate writings, and these fall naturally into two general groups, historical and epistolary, with one only that is prophetical. The historical group contains the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and the Book of Acts. Of the Epistles or Letters thirteen were written by the Apostle Paul, three by John, two by Peter, one by James, and one by Jude. The remaining one, Hebrews, does not reveal its author, and he remains unknown, though there

have been many theories as to the authorship. The book of Revelation, also called the Apocalypse (unveiling) is in a class to itself, though addressed as an Epistle to seven of the churches of Asia Minor.

The four Gospels give a record of the life and teachings of our Lord. The first three are much like each other, and as each one presents a synopsis, or connected account in brief form, of much of the life and teachings of Christ they have been called the Synoptic Gospels.

Their relation to each other has been and remains a question much debated among scholars. Matthew has been by many supposed to be the original Gospel and to have been written in the Aramaic dialect and translated into Greek. But this is by no means certain. Other scholars consider Mark to be the original Gospel, and in accordance with tradition to have been derived from the narrative of Peter. Luke tells us in his preface (Luke 1:1-5) that he had personally gathered the material for his Gospel from original sources. His Gospel included much that is given in Matthew and Mark, but a good deal that is not found elsewhere. Matthew presents the life and teachings of Jesus as the fulfillment of prophecy, and makes its appeal largely to Jewish believers; while Mark and Luke seem to have been written chiefly with the Gentiles in mind. Luke, almost certainly, was himself a Gentile and his Gospel shows some traces of that and

also of his profession as a physician. The Gospel of John, written probably much later than the others, presents the view of that great Apostle concerning the person and teaching of his beloved Lord. It does not present as much narrative as the others, but deals largely with the teachings of the Master. It bears the imprint of a devout and reflective soul.

The Book of Acts, also written by Luke, as shown in its opening words, did not get its title from the author. We do not know what he called it, if anything. But the traditional title is not a very accurate description of the book. It deals briefly with the main events in the history of the church at Jerusalem, and then with the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem as a starting point, giving most of its narrative to an account of the conversion and ministry and imprisonment of the great Apostle Paul. It ends abruptly, and does not give a full account even of Paul's work.

Much of the literature of ancient times has come down to us in the form of letters. In accordance with that custom we have a large group of the New Testament writings in this form. The largest number are those written or dictated by the great Apostle Paul. There are thirteen of these. The first written were the two to the church at Thessalonica which had been founded in trouble on Paul's second missionary journey, as related in the Acts. After these comes a great

group of four: Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans. The dates of these are not positive, but they are generally supposed to have been written during the third missionary journey. Galatians was addressed to a group of churches in a region that has not been positively identified, but is now by many held to be that covered in the first and in the early part of the second missionary journey. This letter sets forth a characteristic discussion of the doctrine of justification by faith, as Paul held it; but it burns with the author's intense personal interest both in the subject and the readers. The two Letters to the church at Corinth deal largely with teaching the Christian faith to a crude and somewhat varied body of church members at the great Grecian city. The Letter to the church at Rome was probably written from Corinth and is generally conceded to be the greatest of Paul's writings. It deals with the great doctrine of salvation by faith, and with the duties which grow out of the soul's new relation to God in Christ. Like Paul's other letters it has an intense and appealing personal strain which gives it vitality and human interest. As the inspired writer and interpreter of God's thoughts Paul reaches his greatest height in this wonderful letter.

Another group of Paul's letters is that called the Epistles of the Captivity, consisting of Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon. These are held to have been written while

Paul was a captive in Rome after his voyage described in the latter part of Acts. Their language fits in well with that view. They deal both with doctrinal and practical subjects essential to the Christian revelation. They present Christ as the Lord and Saviour of men, and the high principles of human conduct growing out of the believer's relation to him. A fourth group of Paul's writings is known as the Pastoral Epistles, consisting of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. Here we have a difficulty as to the time of authorship. It seems probable that 1 Timothy and Titus were written during the first imprisonment and toward its close, but that 2 Timothy was written later, after Paul's probable release and reimprisonment. This last letter is intensely personal and appealing. It speaks of the Apostle's past sufferings and expected end. All three of these letters give counsel and instruction to younger ministers of the Word, and are a treasure house of Christian thought and practice for all time.

Just here should be mentioned the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is the one New Testament book of which the author is unknown. Theories have been offered and defended suggesting that it was written by Paul or Luke or Apollos or Barnabas. It does not itself state its author nor give itself a title. It does not tell to what group of Christians it was addressed. All these things have been matters of debate. The title, "To the He-

brews," was given to it very early in Christian history, but most probably not by the author himself. It is an eloquent and profound discussion of the priesthood of Jesus Christ as compared with the priesthood of the old dispensation. It is an eloquent and thoughtful discourse and contains profound discussions of doctrine and duty.

The group of General Epistles, so called because not directed to particular churches or individuals (except 1 and 2 John), consists of those of James, Peter, John, and Jude. Each has its striking individuality, but all present the Saviourhood and authority of Jesus the Lord, and the Christian life and conduct which come from faith in him. There is trace of prophecy in Peter and in Jude. James presents the practical side, the fruit of faith in life. Peter deals with the Messiahship of Jesus and the conduct of the saints. Jude exhorts to loyalty and to expectation of God's future dealing with the world. John, as the Apostle of Love, deals with that great theme, beautifully illustrated in the two short epistles to Gaius and to "the elect lady." In the First Epistle he presents from various points of view the blessed experience of love as a divine attribute and a Christian grace.

The New Testament closes with the wonderful and difficult book called The Revelation, or Apocalypse. We cannot here go into the difficulties of interpretation of that great book. It was given in the form of visions to John while an exile in

the Island of Patmos. The first three chapters are in the form of a letter to the seven churches of Asia Minor, while the rest of the book presents a marvelous series of visions. These present the conflict and triumph of Christianity. Some of them seem to deal with current history, and some point to the far future. Admitting the difficulties of interpretation, two great ideas stand forth in the book, namely Tribulation and Triumph. God's churches, God's people, will suffer, but in the end the cause and kingdom of our Lord shall triumph over all opponents and enemies and the redeemed of the Lord shall be saved with an everlasting and glorious salvation.

Chapter VI

READING AND STUDYING THE BIBLE

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For reading and studying the Word of God we are greatly blest in having two great Versions in our own tongue: The King James Version and the American Standard Version. We may and should use other translations also, for variety and for help to a better understanding of the Word, but our chief use will be of one or both of the two versions named. Their relative use will naturally be determined by personal preferences and other considerations; but no intelligent lover and reader of the Bible ought to confine his reading to either one of the two great versions. Even if because of its beauty and dignity of style, and because of sentimental associations and preferences, one should continue to use mainly the dear old Authorized Version, he should always remember that the American Standard Version, both in text and language, is much nearer to the inspired original Scripture than is the older translation. For this reason it should always be at hand for reference and comparison, especially on difficult passages. On the other hand if one habitually uses the Revised Version he should often turn to the older book

for the delight and help of its literary and spiritual quality.

Reading the Bible

While it is probably true that the Bible is read more than any other one book or collection of books in the world, it is of course not true that it is read as much as *all* other literature, or read nearly as much or as well as it ought to be. There are great and evident reasons why the Bible should be read, and read far more frequently and fruitfully than it is read.

In general it may be said that as a matter of information and culture the reading of the Bible is important, not to say imperative. Ignorance of the Bible even among the so-called educated classes is surprising, even appalling. Instances are often quoted as amusing. But they are also serious. Such cases of ridiculous and deplorable ignorance can of course be matched in other quarters, but they are none the less distressing and inexcusable in regard to the Bible. It is too much a part of the life and literature of the world for even an ordinarily intelligent person to leave out of his reading.

More particularly is the reading of the Bible a preëminent Christian duty and privilege. This grows out of the belief that the Bible is the true and only revelation of God, and contains the essentials of faith and duty for all time. There

is no need here of argument, but there *is* need of exhortation. It is strange and sad to know that many who readily admit the force of the argument yet neglect the practice of reading the Word of God. It is like the neglect of any other obvious and admitted duty. We should not cease to practice it ourselves and urge it upon others.

For personally the reading of the Bible is indeed "a means of grace." It is impossible to exhaust or exaggerate its spiritual benefits to the devout and intelligent reader. The experience and testimony of the saints on this point flow in ever-increasing volume through the ages. The happy good man of the first Psalm delighted to meditate day and night on God's law, the inspired poet of the nineteenth Psalm declared that law was perfect, "converting the soul" and richly bringing other precious fruits, while in the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm—the longest of all—the author's pious appreciation of the Word of God breathes in nearly every verse. Jesus loved the Scriptures and shows both his knowledge and his evaluation of them in many of his sayings. But why go on? Everybody knows that personal piety is fed by reading the Bible and starved by its neglect. It becomes then a question of practice, of habit, and of method. How may we read the Bible to the best advantage? At once the answer is, Variously, of course. No one method should become ironclad, but the practice should be habitual and as far as

possible regular. Naturally each one will work out his own methods, and yet a few hints or suggestions may be of some value.

There is what may be called the occasional, casual, scrappy way of reading the Bible. This is as the mood, or suggestion, or impulse may direct—much as we "drop into" other books or writings. This has its value, and should be practiced, but can never suffice as the only way.

Then there is the regular, systematic way. The reader has a time for Bible reading, and it is sacredly kept. There is a plan, for daily readings or through the year, covering sometimes parts and sometimes the whole of the Bible. It is desirable that each reader should draw up and follow his own plan, changing it occasionally, so as to avoid falling into a rut. The important thing is that there should be a plan, and that it should be conscientiously observed.[1]

Lastly, there is what may be called the special, intensive way. This will embrace a variety of methods. Sometimes it will be by books—i.e., taking a special book at a time, some of them at a sitting, the longer ones in parts, without regard to their order in the Bible. Sometimes it will be by subjects, with the aid of the concordance, or one of the valuable analyzed Bibles. Sometimes it may be by groups of books, as the Pentateuch, the Psalms, the Gospels in a good Har-

[1] The Daily Bible Readings of the Sunday-school lessons, or those of the B. Y. P. U. may be followed. Dr. Hight C. Moore has arranged a very useful little guide called *Through the Bible in a Year.*

mony, or Paul's Letters grouped in chronological order. Other ways may suggest themselves, or be learned from each other.[2]

Studying the Bible

Intensive reading easily passes into careful study, with more attention to detail and the use of helps to fuller and clearer knowledge than is likely to come from mere reading, however thoughtful. But rather here we have in mind the study of the Bible by specialists of various degrees and kinds, as preachers, writers on religious and moral subjects, teachers and students in seminaries and colleges, in Sunday schools, young people's societies, institutes, and various other groups or persons whose particular object is to study and not merely to read the Word of God.

The first and most obvious thing to say is that study should begin with and be always based on the text of the Bible itself. There is real danger of being led into study of books about the Bible rather than of the Word itself. If possible the original languages should be learned and used, if not alone at least in connection with the two great English Versions, and others. The study would follow somewhat the lines laid down for intensive reading: (1) The Bible (or at least the New Testament) as a whole; or (2) books or

2 Moulton's *Modern Readers' Bible* has helped many.

parts of the Bible as may be selected; or (3) subjects or special topics as occasion or preference may decide.

The next best thing to say is that of course the best available helps for Bible study should be obtained and properly used. There is of these a vast multitude of all conceivable sorts. Beware of being bewildered or suffocated. Seek advice as to the best. A few wholesome dishes are better than a surfeit of rich and varied food. By all means a good Bible Dictionary and Concordance, Maps, a Harmony of the Gospels, some general survey of the history and literature of both Testaments should be at hand. As to commentaries seek advice from those who know, and "get the best" both general and on particular books. The Sunday School Lesson Helps naturally and properly are widely used—they should also be *wisely* used.

We must think of the purpose in view in our study of the Word. This will naturally determine the character of the study. It may be for our own personal devotional and cultural benefit, and this is well. It may be literary—the writing of articles or books on Biblical and practical themes. It may be for preaching, lecturing, teaching, as our calling and opportunities may demand.

In conclusion a few words need to be said as to the spirit in which our reading and study of the Bible should be done. The keywords are in-

telligence, confidence and reverence. The nature, claims and contents of the Bible are such as to demand these in its readers and students.

The highest intellectual powers and resources are demanded and should be exercised in the reading and study of the Word of God. To find and expound the meaning of the Word, to think upon its problems and truths, to feel the impact and drive of its powerful statements and of the wide and fruitful inferences and suggestions which come from these, is a lofty and worthy employment of the intellect at its best. Literature and life alike bear testimony to the truth of this statement. Surely if there is any book or collection of books in the world which requires, justifies and rewards the best work of the mind at its best, that book is the Bible.

We should read and study the Word with a reasoned and calm confidence. It is entitled to such confidence. Its claims are great, but its character sustains them. To read the Bible half doubting it will not bring the best results. To let our study degenerate into criticism and flaw-picking is all wrong. It is true the Bible has been and continues to be assailed from every quarter. The sharpest ingenuity of unbelief has sought to destroy confidence in the truth and value of its teachings. But it has withstood these assaults in every age and remains still the surest moral and religious guide of mankind. This does not mean that every difficulty has been

satisfactorily explained, that all questions have been answered, that no room for difference of opinion remains even among the most conservative believers in the Bible as a divine book. But it does mean that in spite of all attacks from doubting or even hostile criticism the Bible today, in the light of all human knowledge, scientific and historical and other, holds the field as a true and faithful witness to the things of God as made known to man. This is the joyous conviction of thousands of intelligent and thoughtful men and women who are as capable of weighing evidence as are the opposing critics, and are as incapable of mental dishonesty as any of these could be.

It remains to be said that we should study the Bible with reverence. There is a difference between it and other books. It is God's Word. We have too much emphasized the social formula that there is no ultimate distinction between the sacred and the secular. We have made sacred things too secular. We treat all religious things with too much flippancy and irreverence. And the Bible has not escaped. We too often use its language in jest and esteem too lightly its most solemn and awful statements. But this should not be. The Bible is a serious book and brings a serious message. Certainly it is not to be made an object of superstitious and idolatrous veneration, but it ought to be read and studied in the pure light of what it is—the Word of God.

Chapter VII

TEACHING THE BIBLE IN SUNDAY SCHOOL

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We have traced briefly the wonderful way in which we have received the sixty-six writings of the Bible as a "goodly heritage" from the past. Its production, preservation, translation have each engaged our thought in turn; and we have also considered how we may to the best advantage read and study this inspired message of God. So we are naturally brought to the subject of this chapter—Teaching the Bible in the Sunday School. About the first thing we think of in connection with the subject is the vastness of it. It is wonderful to think what an extensive and varied interest this is. And not the least striking thing is the immense literature which it has produced. Thousands upon thousands of books have been written about the many phases of the general subject, and volumes continue to be poured forth from the press in an unchecked stream. If this generation does not learn how to teach the Bible in Sunday school it will certainly not be for lack of being told! Besides the literature there are the assemblies, the institutes, the college work, the classes for teacher training and other agencies devoted to this great end. There

is nothing new to say, but there is much to say. Consider the fact, the problem, the opportunity.

The Fact

The teaching of the Bible in the Sunday schools throughout the world is one of the greatest and most impressive facts of modern Christian life and activity. Think of holding a World's Sunday School Convention in Tokyo, Japan, in 1920! Historically the teaching of the Word of God goes back to the beginning of the Word itself. In Deuteronomy 6:1-9 Jehovah through Moses enjoined the perpetual teaching of the Law; there is frequent reference to such teaching in the Psalms and other literature of Israel; and a vivid account of the renewal of teaching after the Captivity in Nehemiah 8:1-8. Synagogues and teachers, scribes and lawyers abounded. Then came the Great Teacher, who commanded his "disciples" to "make disciples" and "teach" them through all time (Matthew 28:19, 20). Paul gloried in being "a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth." The long line of illustrious teachers runs from Origen through Bede and the Schoolmen to the Reformation which was largely a revival of teaching the Word of God.

Specific Sunday-school teaching began in England in the latter part of the eighteenth century with the labors of Raikes, Fox, Gurney, and

others.[1] Robert Raikes, editor of a newspaper at Gloucester, about 1780, took up with the idea and practice (not original with him) of employing teachers to give instruction on Sundays to the children of the poor. They were taught to read and spell, but some instruction was given in the Catechism of the Church of England, and in morals. The teachers were paid. The movement spread and many such schools were established in England. About this time William Fox began a movement to have more strictly Bible teaching in these schools. The teachers were paid, but the funds were not enough to supply the need of teachers. Then came the movement for unpaid voluntary teaching. This movement was led by William Gurney about the last of the century. Later came the admission of adult persons as learners; and thus the modern Sunday school was brought into being. The movement spread to America, and at least good beginnings were made. Dr. Sampey says:[2] "Between 1810 and 1825 in America the modern Sunday school for *religious* instruction, as we now know it, came to be the prevailing type of school. The purely religious motive gained the ascendancy. In many places the spelling-book was still in use, and the children were taught to read on the Lord's Day; but the chief subject of study in most schools came to be the Bible, as the guide to salvation.

1 See *The International Lesson System*, by John R. Sampey, D.D., p. 1 ff. Much help derived from this valuable treatise.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Sunday schools were founded and maintained by devout Christians for the purpose of leading the scholars to Christ. The Catechism was still used, as it is to-day, as a compend of Scriptural doctrine. The evangelistic note was heard in the opening and closing exercises, as well as in the teaching of the various classes. The question of the poor child who strayed into a Sunday school one day and asked, 'Is this the way to heaven?' could now be answered in the affirmative. The Sabbath school had become for many the way to heaven."

Since those early days the developments have been marvelous. We can neither trace the history nor give an adequate survey of the present situation. But a few outstanding facts should be borne in mind. The Sunday school has found its main mission as the school of the church for teaching the Word of God to all who will join its classes. It is an established and powerful expression and instrument of modern church life. In North America all the Protestant denominations in Canada and the United States and nearly all the local churches in city, town, and country are fully engaged in the work. There are some 20,000,000 people enlisted in it. Consider the organizations that exist for its promotion—denominational and interdenominational—local, county, State, provincial, national, and international and worldwide! Consider the denominational publishing houses with their enormous output of lit-

erature in the way of helps to Bible study and teaching. Remember the International Lesson Committee, that with many changes, has been engaged in the preparation of series of lessons—Uniform and Graded, etc. And do not forget the rise and growth of the Vacation and Week-day Schools!

The Problem

In general the problem of all living and active, powerful and progressive institutions is that of *improvement*—of maintenance, adaptation, development. In the great work of teaching the Bible in the Sunday school this problem presents three sides: material, personal, and literary.

On the material side it is the problem of equipment and organization. Suitable buildings and rooms and appliances for teaching must be provided according as the size and organization of the school requires. Every facility which modern intelligence and interest have devised for the better teaching in schools should be adapted and used in the Sunday school. Surely the Word of God demands as much as any subject to have the best educational instruments for its proper presentation. The graded Sunday school deserves as much as the graded day school.

On the personal side the problem, as in all educational institutions, is that of securing suitable and efficient officers and teachers. Administra-

tion and instruction—these are the pivotal, the critical points. It is of the utmost importance that the superintendent and his associates in the management of the school should not only be competent, but wise. Of course they should be interested in Bible study and not merely in the machinery of the school. Every care should be taken to the one end that the *teaching period* should be suitably guarded and improved.

But of course the main interest and the main problem is the teacher. Many things have been said and written on this ever-important matter, and each one will have his own way of thinking and expressing the necessary things. But perhaps the gist of it all may be compressed into three supremely important qualities: The teacher must be competent, consecrated, and trained. The competent teacher is one who *knows* and also *knows how.* Natural ability—such as intelligence, sympathy, imagination—must be supplemented by actual knowledge of the Bible and other things, and especially of each lesson as it comes. Then there must be skill in imparting knowledge. The pathos of the situation is where a well-informed teacher cannot impart the information at hand! The consecrated teacher is devoted to the Lord, the pupil, and the task. The ideal is beautifully as well as profoundly set forth in the description of the great Scribe (Ezra 7:10): "Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah, and to do it, and to teach in Israel

statutes and ordinances." Seek — do — teach! There is simply no way of emphasizing too much the importance of piety, of genuine character, of love to God and the scholar and the work, on the part of the teacher.

These are the days of trained specialists in every department of human labor and enterprise. Vocational training, no doubt, has its taint of fad and cant, but it also has a basis in good sense. If anybody needs to be trained for efficient service it is the Sunday-school teacher! It is wise and right that much attention is given to this in literature and assemblies.

The literary side of the problem is to provide, circulate, and wisely employ suitable helps for the teaching and learning of the Bible in the Sunday schools. Nobody can claim that the best has yet been done. But the progress made is very apparent to any who know the history and the facts. Helps may be broadly divided into books and periodicals. The former will include all the books on Bible study and teaching, but especially those which are devoted to the varied needs of the Sunday school to-day. As to periodicals let the great publishing houses of the denominations bear witness! To make these better is the constant aim of the leaders in the work.

The Opportunity

Notwithstanding all the recognized imperfections in equipment, method and personnel, it yet is true that Sunday-school instruction as we know it to-day is a powerful force for good, and offers a glorious opportunity to those who are engaged in it. To the pupils of all ages, from Primary to Adult, it brings the opportunity for learning the Word of God. Even in the Sunday school that has the poorest means of impressing the lesson of the day, there is usually some literature of an expository nature and some teacher to guide the study. Something may be learned every Sunday of God's truth and God's will. The educational value, both intellectual and spiritual, of this learning is incalculable.

But we are thinking mainly of the opportunity afforded to the teachers of the Bible to bring its truths home to the minds and lives of the thousands of pupils of all ages who gather every Sunday to study the appointed lesson. In the children's grades the great opportunity of preparation for conversion and activity is to the fore; in the Junior, Intermediate, and Senior classes the time for decision puts the idea of evangelism and soul-winning above all else; while in the Adult classes, composed chiefly of church members, the great aims of instruction, edification, and service are in the lead. For the Sunday-school teacher of to-day the opportunity is there-

fore unparalleled. To learn and teach to others the best and highest things; to mold character and guide thought; to win souls to Christ and build them up in the work and service of the Lord; to help make good citizens in the State and devoted members of the church—such is the task and the high privilege of the Sunday-school teacher.

Nor should the opportunity of the church be forgotten. In the work of the Sunday school the church of to-day finds its opportunity to win and train its members and so provide for the continuance and development of its own life and work. The Sunday school is both the recruiting and the training ground of the church. In it all that the church stands for in the Kingdom of God and in the world can be taught from the Word of God.

The local church, whether considered as a parish or as an independent and self-governing body of Christians is the center of worship, service and teaching in the Kingdom of God. The buildings and other appliances which the church employs in furtherance of its aims and activities are inseparably united with its organic life, as a body, with a spirit. The church thus conceived stands distinctively for religion, for God; as the home, the school, the bank, the store, represent their respective institutions and interests. In the Sunday school, with the Bible as its text-book, the church has ready to its hand a

mighty instrument for impressing and perpetuating its three-fold ideal of worship toward God, salvation and service for mankind, and guidance and development of the spiritual life of its own members. Therefore every church should have a Sunday school, and the very best Sunday school it can provide and maintain.

Chapter VIII

THE BIBLE AND MODERN LIFE

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The Bible is practically and effectively a modern book. It comes down from ancient times, but it belongs to all times. Humanly speaking it is the mental and literary product of one race, but in a broad and true sense it is of and for all races. We have been thinking together of its divine and human origin and authorship, its marvelous preservation through the ages, its translation and distribution among all languages and peoples, its interpretation and application to life and duty, and so we have been led, I trust, to a quickened appreciation of its inestimable value as a message from God to the hearts and minds of the men and women of to-day.

The Adaptation of the Bible to Modern Life

Nothing is more remarkable about the Bible than this very thing. Partly, of course, this is due to the fact of its preservation and constant use among Christians. But it is not wholly because of that. There is a wonderful universality in its language and statement. It appeals to human nature and modes of thought in all ages.

The people it describes are like us in their thoughts, feelings, yearnings, hopes. They sorrowed and sinned, rejoiced and overcame as we do. And so the Word which came to them comes also to us. The Bible in the making of both of its two great parts was thoroughly adapted to its own times. It is a thoroughly oriental and ancient book. But it is because it suited its own times and made a profound and lasting impression on the various epochs and circumstances in which it was produced that it has continued to influence so profoundly and vitally all the ages through which it has passed into our own. If these writings had not made powerful appeal to their own times they would never have reached ours, but would have perished by the way.

In language, as we have seen, the Hebrew of the Old Testament was that of the Israelites before the Captivity and Return. It embodied the sacred teachings and traditions of the Chosen People of God. The collection of books became therefore a precious treasure which insured its care and perpetuation. The Greek of the New Testament was not that of the schools and the classics, but that of the people and of the world in that age. It made its appeal to and through the early Christians in such a way as to lead to the preservation of the various books and to their gradual acceptance as divinely inspired and authoritative, while other contemporary writings were rejected and perished.

Nor was it in language alone that the Biblical writings appealed to their own age. It was in customs, habits, modes of thought and expression. It was live literature in its own time. And that is the secret. It is shown in other literature also; but is preëminently true of the Bible. Of course there is, and presumably always has been, much ephemeral literature. But that survives which expresses with power those truths and principles which, when rightly understood belong to no age exclusively, but to all ages. The language and character, the idioms and thought-forms, even the means of transmission, of each age, are only the vehicles through which the greater things are conveyed.

It is the province and privilege of Christian scholarship—linguistic, historical and archæological—to learn and explain these languages and customs for us. But when they are so explained we find by their means the content of truth and teaching which they bring. Then with wonder and gratitude we see that as Coleridge expressed it, the Bible "finds" us. It is in many of its teachings, its turns of expression, its very words and phrases a truly modern book. Its appeal presents the beautiful combination of ancient flavor and universal and therefore modern and imperishable power.

The Message of the Bible to Modern Life

What, then, is in general outline that content of universal appeal which makes the Bible a modern book? The message which it brings to us is in its essential features the same as for its own time and for all time. We have touched upon these elements in the introduction and elsewhere in the course of our thinking. To remind ourselves of them in a general way we may conveniently group the elements of the Bible teaching about four centers.

1. *The idea of God.* The conception of God as presented in the Bible is in one way so familiar as to be commonplace, and in another way so little studied and thought upon as to be unrealized in its nobleness and greatness. Some narrow and prejudiced persons have even spoken contemptuously of Jehovah as a "tribal God." Absurd! This is like the thought advanced above. He is the God of Israel that Israel may love and serve him, but he is Israel's in trust for mankind, as from Abraham and the prophets to Paul. Jehovah of the Old Testament is the Trinity of the New: Sovereign and Creator—Judge and Saviour—wise, just, holy. "God is love." The God of the Bible meets every demand of the human intellect and of the human heart. The mystery of his being and the problems of his character and actions are no greater than those which meet us in other lines of thought; while the fact of his

existence and the revelation of his attributes are the solution for many other problems.

2. *The origin, nature and destiny of man.* In our age there is no escape from the pressure of these thoughts. They are as important and as weighty as in any age. We must continue to think upon them. The constant Whence, What and Whither in regard to man himself is to-day's as well as to-morrow's and yesterday's problem. The Bible does not fully answer, but it gives us the key: Man is a creature of God in his own image, and yet a marred image—sinful but hopeful, ruined yet capable of restoration—an immortal soul before whom God places the blessed hope and choice of eternal life.

3. *The way of salvation.* To the modern world as to the ancient comes God's message of grace in the gospel. In John 3:16 it is stated: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." By our Lord himself in John 14:6 it is declared: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me." Peter proclaimed it in the early days of the church as recorded in Acts 4:12: "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." Paul lays it down in memorable words as the thesis of the Christian world-view in Romans 1:16, 17:

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is revealed a righteousness of God from faith unto faith: as it is written, But the righteous shall live by faith." These are some of the great outstanding statements; and there are many others. The great aim of the Bible is to bring to men the saving knowledge of God.

4. *The meaning of life.* From first to last the Bible is charged with this. Man is here for a purpose. Israel was called for a purpose. The gospel was given for a purpose of service as well as of redemption. Jesus accepted and defined this service for himself in many sayings, notably in Matthew 20:28: "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Thus he made it the duty and privilege of his followers. Paul in many places shows how he understood and applied it, notably in Philippians 1:21: "To me to live is Christ." And so the four telling words of the Bible's message are: God—Man—Salvation—Service!

The Need of the Bible in Modern Life

The Bible in its origins is indeed an ancient book, but it is not an antiquated book. Its message has ever been needed and was never more

needed than now. The state of affairs throughout the world; the social, political, commercial, domestic, and religious conditions prevalent in our own loved country; the manifestation and reflection of these conditions in our particular communities and circles; yes, and our conscious or unconscious personal reactions toward all this environment, whether near or remote; all these things emphasize with startling force the need of the Bible and its message in this modern world of ours. By bringing up again the points we have just considered we shall see this more clearly.

Do we moderns need what the Bible tells us of God? Most assuredly. If there is anything that the mind and heart of this poor world needs to-day it is the God revealed in the Bible. It is said that Napoleon on reading LaPlace's *Celestial Mechanics* said to the brilliant atheistic author, "There is no mention of God in your book," and LaPlace replied, "Sire, I had no need of that hypothesis." This was the narrow answer of pride; and it was false. He did need "that hypothesis." All men need it. There is an unconquerable yearning of the brain and heart after God. It was expressed with intense emotion by Job when he said (Job 23:3): "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" And by the psalmist (Psalm 42:1): "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." There are many such utterances

in the Bible itself, and scattered throughout all literature. Among the moderns none has put it more clearly and strongly than John Fiske:[1] "There is in every earnest thinker a craving after a final cause; and this craving can no more be extinguished than our belief in objective reality. Nothing can persuade us that the universe is a farrago of nonsense. Our belief in what we call the evidence of our senses is less strong than our faith that in the orderly sequence of events there is a meaning which our minds could fathom were they only vast enough."

With our own understanding of it we may use LaPlace's expression and call belief in God a "hypothesis." This thought is involved in the very idea of faith. The writer of Hebrews has given immortal expression to it in the words (Hebrews 11:6): "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who seek him." The scientific method is partial knowledge, hypothesis, investigation, confirmation. And this is the way of faith. It is a perfectly sound process. We need not be afraid of it, for it is normal in the religious sphere.

Our need of God, of the Bible idea of God, is emphasized when we think of other attempts to explain the mystery of being and of the process of things. There are three ways of looking at these without reference to God: Fate, Chance, and Law. The last is a modern conception. The

1 *The Idea of God*, p. 138.

other two are very ancient. The prophet Isaiah (Isa. 65:11) rebukes a group among his people by describing them as "ye that forsake Jehovah, that forget my holy mountain, that prepare a table for Fortune, and that fill up mingled wine unto Destiny." Here Chance and Fortune are thought of as false substitutes for God. In modern times men have made more or less of a fetish out of Law, especially as prevalent in the physical universe. But even so, these hypotheses do not meet and satisfy the cravings of the mind and heart of man for a personal spiritual God. That there is an element of truth in all these conceptions may be granted. Expressions here and there in the Bible simply and naturally make use of the ideas of Destiny and Fortune and Law. But all that is true in fate is included in the thought of the divine foreordination, which is a Biblical doctrine. All that is true in the idea of fortune is provided for in the Bible teachings concerning the providence of God even in the most minute affairs. And all that is implied in the idea of law and causation finds frequent expression, both poetical and doctrinal, in the simple, often child-like language, in which God is identified with the great powers and forces of nature.

These thoughts of God appeal to science and philosophy. But we know that there is a broader and fuller appeal to man than these can make. The God of our Lord Jesus Christ is the glo-

rious Father whose being includes every worthy thought that man can have concerning deity. Our thinking is imperfect, our language is inadequate; but, accepting these qualifications, we can say with truth that the God revealed in the Bible satisfies every demand of the human soul. He is Creator and Sovereign, the cause and end of all things. And with all this he is a spiritual being, perfect in holiness, in justice, in wisdom, and in love.

Does the modern world need the conception of man as he is presented in the Bible? Certainly it does. The trend of scientific thought in modern times has, to say the least of it, not presented an elevated or a possibly final conception of man. Candid scientists are frank to acknowledge that the views which they more or less firmly hold or teach are only hypothetical at best. Science has no certain word as yet to say concerning the origin and destiny of man. All it can do with these two categories, of origin and destiny, is to investigate and discuss man as he is. And again it must be acknowledged that such investigation and discussion are far from satisfactory. The materialist gives us a very poor idea of what man is, one which neither intellect nor sentiment can accept as complete or final. The Bible does not hesitate to tell us that man is a creation of God, that he has spiritual life, and that there is assurance of immortality for him. The Bible is

positive where mere reasoning is doubtful and hesitant.

The picture of man's actual condition presented in the Bible accords with the facts of observation and consciousness. Call it by whatever terms you may, man is a sinner and knows it. The warfare in his soul is constant. Modern psychologists may call it "the divided self," but modern thinking did not discover the fact; that has come down through all the ages. The Bible is a mirror of the soul. In its wonderful teachings man sees what he is. The modern mind needs such a discussion as that of Paul in the eighth chapter of Romans concerning man's redemption and glory. But it also needs the picture of man's wretchedness and impotence, as described in the seventh chapter. We must realize the terrible paradox presented in the spiritual experience of mankind. We need the sense of sin to counteract pride, and the comfort of faith to offset despair. At his best man needs the whip of divine justice, and at his worst the lift of divine grace.

Does the modern man need the plan of salvation presented in the gospel? Where is there any other? Every system of human thought, ancient or modern, leaves man where it finds him. There is no gospel outside of the Bible. The heart of the Bible is the atonement. It tells of man's finding God by the way of the cross of Jesus

Christ. It presents the supreme sacrifice of love. It emphasizes the need of redemption through suffering. In the Bible we find the divine paradox of mercy and judgment, how God can be just and yet the justifier of him who hath faith in Jesus. Never mind just now about theories of the atonement, never mind about critical objections to the shedding of blood as a sacrifice for sin. Logic stumbles and questions, but love overcomes. Great thinkers and simple savages alike have found here their peace and their hope in a Saviour who was at once divine and human and gave his life that by trusting in him men might be saved. We have here the eternal and perfect way of salvation for man.

Do we need the ideal of a good life as presented in the Bible? Where shall we go to find one as good or better? It cannot be found elsewhere. There is no better. Here even skeptical criticism for the most part sinks to a suspicious whisper, or at worst to a malicious snarl. Great thinkers of every school are well nigh unanimous in praise of the Biblical conception of the meaning and purpose and obligation of human life as that is variously unfolded in the Bible and finally approved, expounded and enjoined in the example and teachings of Jesus Christ. John Stuart Mill, one of the keenest skeptical thinkers of the nineteenth century, candidly said, "Religion cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this Man as an ideal representative and guide

to humanity; nor even now would it be easy even for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than the endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life."[2]

The immediate followers of Jesus, including the authorized interpreters of his principles and doctrines, warmly accepted and frequently expressed his ideals. Notable utterances are found in all the New Testament writers. John was the apostle of love, James of practical Christianity, Peter of the glorifying obligation of Christian duty; while Paul in teaching and in life set forth with power and eloquence the essentials of Christian living. For himself he declares (Gal. 2:20): "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me."

It is totally beside the mark to say that the glorious ideal has never been realized. Certainly it has not. Disobedience to God is the characteristic sin of the Old Testament, and rejection of Jesus and his gospel that of the New. Ignorance, unbelief, and hostility have characterized man's attitude toward the life, as well as the doctrine of the gospel. They do still. But this very condition constitutes the ever-existing need of the gospel. On the other hand, it is true that the nearer men have come, both in personal and in social life, to realizing the Biblical ideal, their

2 *Three Essays on Religion*, p. 255.

human life has found its noblest expression. Those who make the personal struggle for nobler and better living know that the nearer they are to being and doing what Jesus taught, the more pure and strong their lives become. In observing others every one knows that the best people in the world are the best Christians in it. The ideal Christian is the ideal person. Extending this thought, it is easy to see and to say that the best social life, community life, is that in which the principles of Bible living are exemplified. From the Ten Commandments to the Sermon on the Mount the Bible throbs with the possibility, the duty, and the glory of noble living. The supreme moral and social need of our time, as of all times, is the realization in actual life of the ideal thus presented in the Word of God.

Our Duty to the Bible in Modern Life

It is natural and proper that from the point which last engaged our attention we should come, as a conclusion to our whole study, to consider our obligation as Christians in regard to the Bible and the life of our times. It is simple and obvious to say that in view of the Bible's message and the present evil world's deep and desperate need of just that message our duty is to give the Bible to the world. Prayerfully and earnestly we are to think of how we can best discharge that duty.

Perhaps the most obvious, as it is the easiest way, is to give money to those Christian organizations whose purpose is to spread the Bible and its teachings throughout the world. Missionary Boards and Bible Societies abound. They must be supported. They are doing a vast and extensive work in making known the truths of God in the home country and throughout all lands. They are now an essential and integral part of Christian organization and effort. Every dollar given to aid in the propagation of Bible principles is both a sound and a productive investment. The missionary ideal is the ultimate triumph of the truth of God in every heart and home and land.

This material expression of concern for the spread of the truth must be founded in the actual personal interest of Christian people. In our own lives we must exemplify and teach the Bible to others. This is not for our own benefit only, but it is for the sake of all who can behold our conduct and be influenced by example. Jesus said, "Let your light shine that others may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Besides this silent influence there should be active, practical effort to teach the Bible to others. The great Sunday-school work in its many phases and opportunities is before us. By active participation and by encouragement and support every Christian should in some way be enlisted in this work. As we have seen, it reaches

out from the individual and the community to the uttermost bounds of creation. Jesus said, "Ye are my witnesses unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

It remains simply to point out in conclusion the indispensable, personal duty. Everybody ought to be a Christian, and the best Christian possible. Beginning with the consciousness and shame of sin and fault, resolutely turning away from evil, confiding and trusting one's whole self to the Saviour in love and gratitude for his grace, and then out of these showing in thought and in conduct alike a loyal allegiance to the Lord, which worships him and serves fellowman—this is to be the ideal Christian.

Jesus said that if lifted on the cross he would draw all men to himself. Paul said he was willing to become all things to all men that by all means he might save some. So to bring the lost world to Jesus Christ is the imperative duty of Christians. To place the Word of God in every home, in every tongue, in every life on this planet is the tremendous task of the people of God today. So in every way let us labor and pray that the grand prophetic ideal may be reached, and "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea."

THE END

DARGAN

The Bible, our heritage